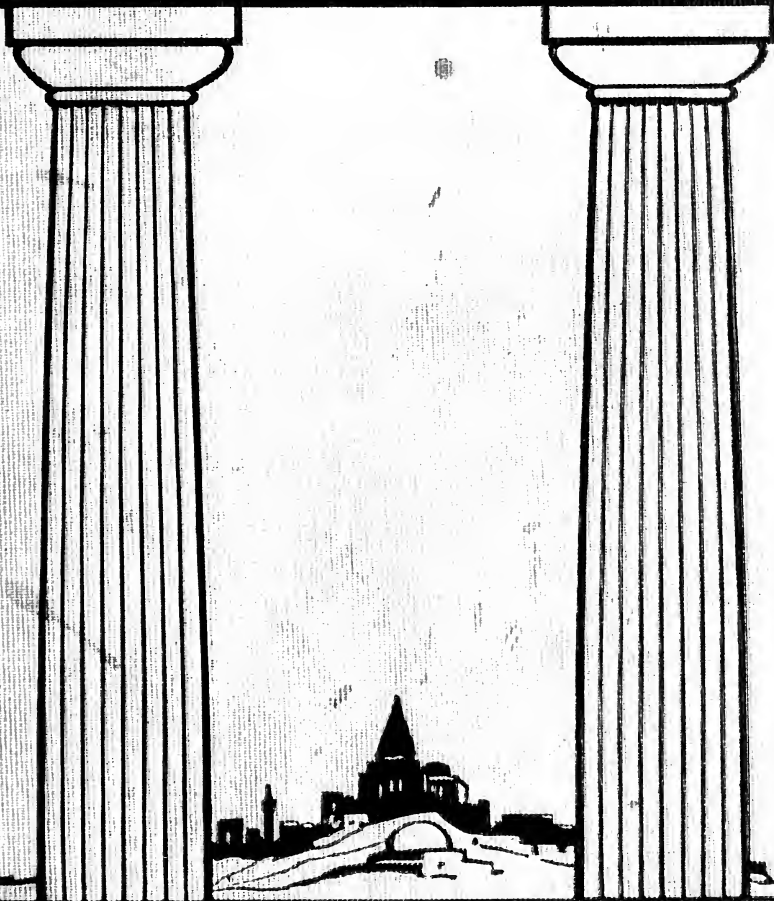


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THE TEMPLE



MINOT J. SAVAGE

PILLARS OF THE
TEMPLE

PILLARS OF THE TEMPLE

BY

MINOT J. SAVAGE

Author of "OUT OF NAZARETH," "MEN AND WOMEN,"
"LIFE BEYOND DEATH," etc.

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To
Robert Collyer
by one
glad to be called
“Comrade”

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INTRODUCTION

The publishers of this “small book on great subjects” ask me to write a foreword by way of a preface, and I am glad to do this, because I am in some small measure its sponsor. Many years ago, when I was the minister of Unity Church in Chicago, and before I had found out what I could *not* do, I said—to myself—I will preach a course of sermons on our faith, under these heads: The God We Worship, The Christ We Love, The Heaven We Hope For, The Hell We Fear, The Bible We Accept, The Divine Inspiration, The Salvation We Believe In, and The Church We Belong To. These titles were duly recorded in my note book, and are still there, in large script. Many notes were made, and resolutions, also; skeletons, but the course was never given. They were dry bones, and no breath was given me to make them live, so I was fain to imagine when I found what

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I could not do that this was one of the good intentions that pave the way to heaven.

Eight years ago my dear comrade, as I love to call him, came to take charge of the church of the Messiah, of which I had been the sole minister seventeen years, and then it came to pass that in turning over my old note book in quest of a citation I came across the script of my unborn course, and musing over them, may I confess with a pathetic interest but with no pang now of "the hope deferred which maketh the heart sick," the thought flashed forth that my comrade was the one man who could make my dream of the "course" come true. So I told him the story of my good intention, and the titles of the sermons. I knew them as we know our pater noster: the eight affirmations touching the grand essentials of the faith we hold and teach as ministers and members in the church of the living God. And this is the story of the way I became, in some small measure, sponsor for the book, and write this foreword.

I need hardly say a word of my joy in listening to these sermons. There were times

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when I wanted to say a loud *Amen*, in the good old Methodist fashion, but that would not be good taste, you know, so I would mutter the word under my breath. They will speak for themselves to thousands of readers, who will be at no loss if they take them well to heart, about the answer we can give to those who ask us what Unitarians believe. There would be a whisper now and then in my hearing that some sermon was "a little too long," but I would have not one of them shorter. The Seer on Patmos saw the city of God in his vision, and says the length and the breadth and the height of it were equal; and when this is true of your sermon I think no hearer or reader will complain. It is the truth to me touching these eight "Pillars of the Temple."

ROBERT COLLYER

THE GOD WE WORSHIP

I.

THE GOD WE WORSHIP

The first forms of life which appeared on earth were horizontal. As life evolved and developed through its various grades, it rose, until, when we come to man, he stands on his feet in a perpendicular attitude. Not only does he look around him, but he is the one being, as the Greeks named him, who is an upward-looker; he is the one being haunted by an unattained ideal; he is the one being who can consciously worship,—worship in the true sense of that word,—not as going through certain set forms and ceremonies, but as to the attitude and emotion of the mind and the heart.

The man who worships admires: he admires something that he thinks of as above and beyond him. And, if you consider it a moment, you will see that in this fact lies the promise and potency of all growth. Only the worshipper can advance: he admires

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something above and beyond him, and strives after its attainment.

Worship, then, instead of being derogatory and humiliating, is the one crowning glory of human nature. Indeed, the man who does not worship is not a man, because he has left out of his account that which is most essential and noblest in human nature.

If, however, we are to worship God in anything more than a perfunctory and formal way, we must have a God that we can worship, that we can admire, that we can reverence, that we can love, that we can think of as embodying all our dreams, all our hopes, all our unattained ideals.

We cannot worship the God of the old Hebrew tribes, that God who endorsed and exacted human sacrifice. We cannot worship the God of the flood. He was pleased, as he sat up in heaven, it is said, at the smell of the burning flesh, when Noah sacrificed to him, and on account of it promised that he would not drown the world again. We cannot worship that kind of a God.

We cannot worship the God of Babel, who heard a rumor up in heaven that men down

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here were going to build a tower in the attempt to scale the celestial regions, and, lest they should succeed in their high endeavor, comes down and confuses their tongues.

We cannot worship the God of the Egyptian plagues, who first hardens Pharaoh's heart, and then, because his heart is hard, punishes not Pharaoh only, but every family throughout the land by the slaughter of the first-born son.

We cannot worship the God of the conquest, who makes the sun stand still in heaven in order that a Jewish general may have daylight in which to slaughter his enemies; who commands one of his captains to put to death on a certain occasion, when a town had been captured, all the men, all the married women, all the children, and to distribute the young women among the soldiers. We cannot worship that kind, even if it is in the Bible.

We cannot worship the God of David. David's character was not one that we can admire to-day; and yet it is said that he was a man after God's own heart. He does wrong; and again, as in the case of Pharaoh,

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instead of punishing him, God slays forty thousand innocent Israelites. We cannot worship that conception of God.

It begins to clear itself,—this ideal,—as we come into the atmosphere of some of the noblest of the prophets. We begin to find out that he does not care for bloodshedding, for sacrifice, but wants right thoughts, right feelings, right actions on the part of his worshippers.

One of the finest and noblest sayings in all the Bible is that which the unknown author of “John” has put upon the lips of Jesus, making him say, “God is Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” But when we remember that the Gospel according to John is all covered with the finger-marks of the Gnostic philosophy, and when we remember what their peculiar ideas were,—we are not quite sure that even those noble words are adequate to the thought of this twentieth century.

We cannot worship the God of the Catholic Church, in its power exclusive, arrogant, cruel, the God of the Inquisition, the God of the thumb-screw and the rack, the God who

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burns the majority of the people in the next world forever and thousands in this.

We cannot worship the God of Calvin, who selects certain ones, without any regard to their character, to be saved, and who passes by the great majority of the race, not because they are worse than those that are to be saved, but in order that they may illustrate his justice and his power, and lets them go to eternal torture.

We cannot worship the God of the Westminster Confession. We cannot worship the God of our Puritan forefathers, who divided the world between good and evil, God and the Devil, permitting the Devil to send judgments and to display his wrath upon people almost at his will, who could take possession of poor, distracted old women and make them fit only to be tortured and slain.

We cannot worship the God of the Episcopal Prayer Book as it is printed and distributed to-day, a God who saves such infants as the priest has touched with consecrated water, but holds out no hope for any others.

Let us remember, as we survey the thoughts that have been held concerning God

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in the past, that we are under no necessity to apologize or explain for thoughts set forth in the Bible which we cannot accept to-day. These were not God's thoughts. They were the ignorant, partial, many times barbaric thoughts of men about God, and of no more authority over our thinking or our conscience or our hearts to-day than any other barbarism which we are grateful to have outgrown.

Let us remember that, when we say "God" or when we look at it on a printed page, this word represents—what? Not the actual, eternal, infinite Being, but somebody's thought about him, somebody's imagination about him; that is, somebody's power to frame an image, a likeness, so far as possible.

And a thought about God may be an idol as much when it is merely a thought as it is when it is painted on canvas or carved out of a bit of wood or stone.

The word "God" represents either the highest and noblest ideal that the mind of man at any particular time can frame or else it represents a traditional thought which has been inherited, which has come to be

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regarded as sacred, and which people dare not change, or improve; though I suppose it is always true at any stage in the history of the world that the real thought of God which loving mothers and noble fathers worship is better than the God of the printed creed which they feel traditionally bound to accept.

Let us remember another thing. We to-day have light thrown on this great problem such as the world has never possessed before. We have a better opportunity, a more hopeful opportunity, to think and frame some worthy conceptions of God than men have ever had at any time in the past; and let us fearlessly and frankly accept this light that has come to the modern world, be grateful for it, knowing that every new ray of light is only a new revelation from the Father, remembering that a mistake, however old, is still a mistake, and a truth, though only discovered this morning and so called new, is still as old as the universe, as old as God, and that the truth is the only thing that is sacred.

I am going to ask you to follow me through a line of somewhat careful thinking for a

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little time in the endeavor to find a conception of God based in reality, according with our best knowledge, which can appeal to us as worthy of manly, womanly, reverent, tender, loving worship. Can we find any such God? Come with me and see.

In the first place, and as preliminary to this, it is worth noting that modern knowledge has given us a conception of the universe worthy of being a temple of the infinite God. The old thoughts about the universe were mechanical, narrow, contracted, unworthy.

The Church, curiously enough, has always been afraid of Science. I never could understand why; but it has. And yet Science is proving, in my judgment, to be the Church's best friend, a great true friend of the religious life.

We have then at last a universe boundless in range, infinite so far as we can think. Nobody can dream of a limit; for, if you build a wall from the zenith to the nadir, something is forever beyond the wall. If you think of a limit anywhere, infinity is beyond that limit.

And not only the infinitely great. Modern

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Science is leading us to the brink and helping us to look down into the abysses of the infinitely little as never before. By means of the Roentgen rays, the discovery of the new metal, radium, and other investigations of the chemist, we are finding that the small, the infinitesimal, is even more overwhelmingly magnificent than is that part of the universe which is revealed to us by the telescope. So, an infinite house for the infinite God.

And now, when we raise the question as to the nature of this revelation, the impression which this universe makes upon us, what shall we say?

First we stand in the presence of Omnipotence, infinity, measureless, boundless Power. If I had time to give you illustrations, perhaps I might impress something in this direction upon your minds, as the mere statement does not.

To take, in passing, one simple illustration. Here is our little moon, two hundred and forty thousand miles away from the earth, one of the tiniest objects in space. Have you any idea of how much power it means when we say that gravitation holds the moon in its orbit and swings it around our globe?

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Suppose you should take a solid bar of steel a mile square: lay it beside the Catskills, and their highest peaks do not reach to its measure. Would one of those, a solid bar of steel a mile square, represent the power that holds the moon to the earth? It would take eighty-seven thousand of them to measure the power of gravity which keeps our little moon in its orbit.

If you should take bars of steel a quarter of an inch square and attach them from the earth to the moon, you would have to cover that side of the earth which looks towards the moon with these bars only six inches apart to represent this little tiny fraction of God's power. Multiply it by infinity, and then stretch the word "Omnipotence" until it begins to mean something to you.

Not only is it an omnipotent Power that we face, it is one Power. For the first time in the history of human thought we know this in the modern world. In old times they had a multiplicity of gods, because, so far as they could analyze the forces that were at work around them, there were a multiplicity of forces all in conflict and antagonism with

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each other, making weltering confusion everywhere.

Now we know, as the result of that demonstration which we sum up in the phrase "correlation of forces," that there is only one force in the universe, and that all the varieties of force that we think of are convertible into each other. An infinite Power, one Power, the basis, the guaranty of that great Unity for which as a Church we love to stand. Infinite Power, one Power.

The next step compels us to recognize that the manifestations of this infinite Power are orderly. It is an orderly universe, an intelligible universe,—never anywhere, so far as we can penetrate by our investigation with telescope or microscope, any sign of the tiniest infraction of the perfect law of order.

An intelligible universe,—what does that mean? It means intelligence: an intelligible manifestation must be the manifestation of a Power that is itself intelligent. An infinite Power, one Power, an intelligent Power.

Another step, and this startling in its significance, when we think of it as the dictum of the clearest modern science. Herbert Spencer

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has told us, as one of the results of the great demonstrated science of evolution, that the Power manifested in the universe is the same power as that which wells up in us under the form of consciousness; so that this infinite eternal Power, this intelligent, orderly Power, is like us. We are of kin to it; and on the basis of that kinship we can use those marvelous words of Tennyson:—

“Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with
Spirit may meet,—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands
and feet.”

This Power, then, is a quasi-human power: it is of kin to that which is deepest in ourselves. This is scientific demonstration.

Is it personal? What do we mean by personal? Is it conscious? What do we mean by conscious? The essential thing in personality is consciousness: a person is one who can think and say, “I.” In that sense this infinite, one, orderly, intelligent, spiritual Power is personal.

For this Power, you must remember,—it is demonstrated as the result of the clearest

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science,—is not material, not the manifestation of material forces. Material forces are only partial manifestations of this Power. This Power is first; and the material universe is only its flowing, changing garment. All the phenomena of the universe, so far as we can perceive them, are only partial and changing manifestations of this Power.

Now is this Power good? Have we a right to speak of it as good? I believe that it is the result of the demonstrations of modern knowledge that we can say that it is good, always good, everywhere good, and that it can by no possibility be thought of in any other way.

Think for a moment. All the good there is in the universe is the result of knowing and obeying the Power, the laws of this universe. If these laws were understood perfectly and perfectly obeyed, the universe would be perfect, human life would be perfect, everything would be precisely what it ought to be.

Do you not see, then, that this statement itself carries positive and eternal demonstration of the statement that the universe in itself is good? It must be good, because obedience to its laws results always and

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everywhere in good. We have no other definition for goodness, we have no other ideal of goodness, than this.

Let me obey the universal laws perfectly, and, so far as my body is concerned, I am in perfect health. Let me come into perfect accord with it mentally, and I am illumined by a perception of the truth. Let me come into perfect relations with it so far as the heart life is concerned, and I love all that is fine and noble and true. Let me come into right relations with it spiritually, and I am consciously a child, a loving follower, a friend of God.

Perfection means perfect obedience to the laws of the universe,—that is, the law of God; and this means perfect goodness.

But the suffering in the world, the sin in the world,—does this accord with the goodness of God? I am aware of articles being written constantly from this point of view. I get letters constantly, week after week, from people who are troubled by this aspect of affairs. This I know has been the stock in trade of those who have tried to think they were atheists. But let us consider it just for a

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moment. It depends upon what your idea of a good world is.

If a good world is simply a happy valley, in which people are secluded and guarded from every rough wind, from every twinge or touch of pain, where they never meet with a loss, never have a heartache,—if that is your ideal of a good, of a best world, certainly this is not the one.

But let us note. The universe, if it is going to be good, must be governed in accordance with universal, unchanging law. It must be the expression of a perfect order. Why?

In the first place, if you will allow me to speak of it in this anthropomorphic way, God does certain things a certain way under certain conditions. Why? Because it is the right way, the best way. Now let those conditions arise again, repeat themselves, God of course must do the same thing he did before or he must do a poorer thing. If it was the best thing in the first place, it will be the best thing under the same conditions in the second and third and fourth and thousandth place. You can deduce the universality of the constant action of God from that consideration.

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But look at it in another way? If we are ever going to be able to learn anything about this world, it has got to be an orderly world. If the laws of nature were liable to change any minute, or if we found a thing this way to-day and to-morrow some other way, how could we ever know anything? Knowledge would be impossible in a world like that.

The only basis of what we call knowledge is the constant order of natural forces, the thought that we can count on things. Water freezes now, we say, under ordinary conditions, at thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit. Suppose to-morrow it froze at nineteen or forty-two, how would you ever know anything about water or ice? You would simply have to wait, and be living in a universe of utter confusion.

So, if you are going to have anything like knowledge, if men and women are going to be able to train themselves intellectually, grow, cultivate themselves as intellectual beings, they must be in a school-house where perfect order is observed; so this universe is the best kind of a school-house, if people are ever to come to anything.

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Suppose they do hurt themselves now and then, because they are ignorant of the law or will not obey it? The only way they are to learn is through hurting themselves and finding out that it does not pay to hurt, recognizing limits and keeping within them. This is the only way to grow.

And this is the only way to grow morally. Suppose every time I did wrong, instead of meeting the necessary result in the way of suffering, an angel interfered and stood between the cause and the effect? Do you not see that moral growth again would be utterly out of the question? We should be living in a perpetual nursery: there would be no possibility of our growing up, of our coming to be anything.

Growth, intellectual, moral, spiritual, in every direction, means learning how to live in the midst of a universe on which you can count every time. If people could have their way, and have God interfere to save them from the results of their own actions, physical or mental or moral, it would be the most disastrous thing that ever happened to them. We should be in a madhouse instead of in

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a universe of order and growth and development.

I believe, then, that it can be demonstrated beyond question that the universe is a good universe; and, if the plan and purpose of things includes our intellectual and moral development,—if that is what we are living for instead of merely having our own way and following our own whims every five minutes of the day,—then I think it can be very easily shown that this is the best conceivable kind of world.

It is a good world, then; and the Power manifested in it is a good Power. All that we need to do in order to eliminate the evils which trouble us is to come into accord with the laws and the life of this Power; for this Power is a living Power, a spiritual Power. There is no such thing as dead matter. There is nothing dead anywhere in the universe. There is simply the transition and change from one thing to another perpetually going on; but the universe in every particle of it is throbbing and thrilling with an infinite life.

And then, again, while we can longer keep

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Paley's idea of design, there is a larger, grander conception of purpose that, it seems to me, we must hold. The universe, we say, is evolving: it is alive, growing, reaching out towards something. In other words, it is going somewhere; there is a purpose that lifts and thrills and leads and reaches on towards something, so that we have a right to use again those other words of Tennyson:—

“One life, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”

The universe is going somewhere. And again, as bearing on the question of goodness, a thing which is in process and is not yet complete is not to have final judgment passed upon it. You pick an apple in June, and it is bitter and sour. Wait until it gets ripe; then you may talk about it.

So you have no right to judge these processes of which we are a part until you know towards what “far-off divine event” they are moving.

Where is this God? I will use an illustra-

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tion which I think I have used before,—which I have found to be helpful to many. I have used it in personal conversation with individuals a good many times, and found that it helped clear their thinking.

Do not imagine that I conceive it to be accurate in every part: no illustration can be that. It is only suggestive and helpful; but it ought to help us, when we remember that God is not the one mystery of the universe. He is no more mysterious than is a leaf or a flower. You remember Tennyson's "Flower in the Crannied Wall." He says, if we could only understand that, we could know God and man both. If I could understand a blade of grass, I could understand God.

In other words, every simplest thing with which we become familiar and think we know in the wide universe has about it as much of unfathomable, inexplicable mystery as has God himself. God is no more mysterious than I am. Let me talk about myself for a moment, and see.

You never saw God; you do not know just where to locate him; you cannot think of

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him as everywhere, and yet as all at any particular place. But you never saw me; you never will see me; nobody ever saw me. I am not this body; I use this body. I was alive twenty years ago. I did not have this body at that time; but I was there, and I have kept my identity in some inexplicable way through all these changes. If this body should die, all of the body would be here; but I should not be here. So I am not the body; and I am invisible as much as God is invisible.

And, so far as this body is concerned, I am omnipresent. Where will you locate me in my body? Am I in my hands, my feet, my heart where it beats? Where am I? I am everywhere throughout this body. When I am walking, all of me that is necessary for the process of walking is in my feet. When I am using my hands, I am in my hands. When I am thinking, I am somewhere in vital connection with the brain. When I am writing, the pen even becomes a part of my personality. I am at its tip, expressing myself in conventional lines that some one else can interpret as the expression of thought.

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When I speak, I am shaping this viewless air at the tip of my tongue and on my lips, turning it into sound,—again the expression of thought or feeling, of fear or hope.

I am as mysterious, then, as God is. And, when I look out on this universe and remember that it is all alive, why should I not in some large way think of it as the body of God, who is everywhere, omnipresent? And yet all of him that is needed is in this rose-leaf, its life, its beauty, its fragrance; all of him that is needed is in the wandering asteroid that never is lost, but always fulfils the law of its being; all of him that is needed is in the infinitesimal world, that reaches down unspeakably beyond the range of human vision; all of him that is needed is in the most distant star that shines on the outermost verge of imagined space.

All of him that is needed is here. “In him we live and move and have our being.” He is in the beat of my pulse, the throb of my heart: it is because of him that I can think and feel. We are all a part of this infinite and eternal Mystery; but God is no more mysterious than is any of the rest.

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I want to quote you—not because it completely expresses my thought, but because it is so full of the spirit of modern science—one of the sweetest and most beautiful bits of verse I know of as hinting at this larger thought of God which is coming into our modern world:—

“A fire mist, and a planet,
A crystal and a cell;
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod,—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

“A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite tender sky;
The ripe, rich tints of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high;
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the goldenrod,—
Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

“Like the tide on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in,—

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Come from the mystic ocean
Whose rim no foot has trod,—
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God.

“A picket frozen on duty,
A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
The million who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway trod,—
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God.”*

So we think that God loves, that he cares, that we in our little personal lives are a part of his plan. Why, think! Not only Sirius is a part of his plan, but the thousands of little, infinitesimal, inconceivable particles which we now know to be circling in their orbits within the limits of the tiny, invisible atom. Each one of these is in God's grasp, and kept in its order by his wisdom and power.

There can be no great order unless all little things and persons are a part of it. We are God's children: we can think about

*Written by Prof. William Herbert Carruth, of Kansas.

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him, we can love him; and all this love and tenderness and sympathy which are in our hearts are only little, tiny, partial manifestations of what is infinite in him.

The hero, the martyr,—God cares for high ideals and noble deeds and truth as much as they; for they are only a partial manifestation of God.

The mother watching her sick babe with an infinite yearning,—does God care as much as that? Why, that is only one mother; and there are millions of mothers, with the same love and tenderness. And these are only partial manifestations, here on one little, tiny planet, of the life and the power and the love of the infinite God.

Here a little while ago, in a vacant lot, a deserted four-days-old babe was found, clasped in the paws of a mongrel dog, that had found it suffering and cold, and was trying to impart to it its own warmth at the cost of its own life. Has God put as much as that into the heart of a dog and yet there is none of it in himself?

All the tenderness, all the yearning, all the love, all the sacrifice, all the sympathy,

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all the consecration of all the world, are only little hints, gleams, glints, of light, touches of that which is perfect in the one centre and source of it all.

God, hero; God, martyr: God, father; God, mother; God, lover; God child,—God in all the beauty, all the fragrance, all the glory, all the tenderness, all the sweetness, all the hope of all the world.

THE CHRIST WE LOVE

II

THE CHRIST WE LOVE

Our topic, note, is "The Christ We Love." You are aware of the fact that "Jesus" is the personal name of the man, and that the word "Christ" represents an official title,—Jesus the Christ, the Anointed, as he came to be regarded in later years. Of course, we are all familiar with the truth that the word "Christ" has come to be used commonly, and somewhat indiscriminately, as though it were the personal name. It is not a matter of great importance, but for clearness of thought it ought to be borne in mind.

One of the most difficult things in the world, I suppose, is to get a clear and anything like an adequate conception of anybody's personality. How much do we really know of any one? Are we sure that the picture we have in mind of our closest friend is quite accurate, quite complete?

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We are such complex individualities; and we touch only in certain superficial ways and at certain points. The image I have in my mind of any one of my acquaintances I would not dare to think of as complete. I have certain tastes. I meet this friend on the common ground of these tastes; but he cares perhaps for many things that do not touch me. These sides of him I do not know.

There are business men; and other business men think they are acquainted with them. All they know about them is what they appear to be as business men. The home side of their life, the charity side, which they sedulously hide away, the inner heart of them, the aspirations, the hopes, the other man may not know at all. So his conception of his acquaintance may be so inadequate as to be a distortion of the reality.

If this is true of people we meet on the streets and talk with day by day, how much more must it be true concerning historic characters, persons who are no longer living, about whom we have only partial and inadequate reports of impressions which they made upon the people of their time! How

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accurate these reporters were, how competent they were to understand, we have no way at present of finding out.

I suppose that there is hardly any man who has lived during the last two or three hundred years that we know more about than we do about Dr. Johnson. Boswell, his biographer, followed him everywhere, watched him under all conditions, set down everything that he said and everything that he did, so far as he could find it out, so that perhaps we have a more nearly complete picture of him than of any man who has lived for hundreds of years; and yet who would dare say that he knew all about Dr. Johnson?

And this is still more true concerning those men about whom passions and prejudices raged. Take a man who belongs to a certain political party, and who is prominent in it. He is sure not to be understood or correctly reported by those belonging to the opposite party. Even his friends may be over-enthusiastic about him, because they agree with him; and his enemies are sure to misrepresent him.

When we consider a character like Napo-

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leon, what shall we say about him? You read Scott's Life of Napoleon, and then you read Abbott's; and here are two diametrically opposite characters. He could not have been both: which was he? Perhaps an incomprehensible mingling of the two; for all of us have what appear to be contradictory qualities and characteristics.

But, when we go back nineteen hundred years and try to find the personality of a man like Jesus of Nazareth, the difficulty, you see, becomes unspeakably greater than even in these cases that have been used by way of illustration. For Jesus in the imaginations, in the conceptions of the world, has ranged all the way from the God of this universe to a myth who had no historical existence at all.

What shall we say about him? We have only four little fragmentary stories that we have come to call the Gospels; and they do not agree. The earliest writing we have that is now a part of the New Testament is the Epistles of Paul. Paul tells us nothing about the history, the earthly personality of Jesus. Paul has never heard anything about any

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story of a wonderful birth, never makes any allusion to it.

He treats his death and his resurrection as materials out of which he creates his great dogmatic scheme for the deliverance of man from the effects of the fall in Adam? He gives us no material out of which we can construct an adequate idea of the historic Jesus after whom we would gladly go in search.

But so marvellous have been the results that have flowed from something that happened nineteen hundred years ago in the little country that stretches as a narrow border along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean that we must believe that somebody was there. How near can we come to knowing a Christ whom we can love? Let us see.

I wish first, if I may, to find if there is a boy that I can love and admire. We know absolutely nothing, so far as the records are concerned, about his boyhood. It is a blank for the first thirty years, except for one little, evidently unhistorical glimpse that Luke gives us of a visit supposed to have been made to the temple.

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Very likely he did visit the temple at that time. Very likely he did ask the doctors wise questions. Very likely he did show himself an unusual child. He must have been an unusual child. The poet tells us that "the child is father of the man;" and from our knowledge of the man we can with some adequacy at any rate resurrect the childhood.

If in your journeys through a country you come to the foot-hills of a mighty range of mountains, and there, rushing out of the unexplored mystery of the hills, a river appears, dashing and foaming by at your feet, you can estimate with some accuracy the source and the nature of the stream that is hidden as yet by the hills as you look at what appears in the plan.

So, I think we can very fairly estimate the boyhood of Jesus. We know what was the ordinary life of a Jewish boy at that time. I think of him as born in the little hill town of Nazareth. His father was Joseph: his mother was Mary. The only angels that sang over his birth were the angels that love us and watch over the birth and the growth of all the lives of all God's human children.

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The mother, Mary, went, as all mothers have done from that day to this, down to the edge of the shadow in her agony, and took from the very hand of Death the flickering torch of a new life, that she might pass it on to the generations that were to come; and Joseph looked on in that yearning, reverent, loving wonder that is in every true father's heart, loving the mother and loving the child.

And he grew up in that little quiet home in Northern Galilee. We can see him playing about the streets, sitting by the well when the women come at evening to get water and to linger for a little and exchange the gossip and the news of an uneventful day.

We can see him in the synagogue at his lessons, as every Jewish child was accustomed to study in those days. He learned the law, the Commandments, the history of his people, the dreams of the prophets and the seers as they looked out over the future and discerned the dim outlines of some better time that was to come.

He worked patiently and faithfully at his trade, thus glorifying work from that day

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to this. And then he dreamed. If you think of it, you know that some of the most important things that any boy ever does is to dream. He looked away over the hills towards where he knew the Holy City sat upon its Mount of Zion; and in the light of what had been foretold he saw the time coming when all the world should be blessed through the ministry of the religion of his people.

And, then, perhaps on some rare excursion he went to Capernaum; and here the great caravans passed by along the border of the lake, trading from East to West and from West to East. He saw not only his own people, but Greeks and Romans and Egyptians and Arabians and Persians, and other dwellers in the Far East.

And he waked up perhaps then in some hour of illumination to what he showed that he comprehended afterward,—a conception of humanity. Here were other children of the Father besides those that were called children of Abraham; and so he had his vision of the time when they should come from the east and from the west and from

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the north and from the south, and should sit down in the kingdom of his Father.

So the natural, human, working, studying, dreaming boyhood went by; and this is the Christ that I love.

The next scene: he is standing by the Jordan. He is thirty years old. He has come up to be baptized by the man that he has declared to be superior to any of the prophets connected with the old dispensation,—John the Baptist.

He wishes quietly and simply to conform to the ordinary religious customs of his people. So he desires to be baptized; and in the light of the wonderful things that happened afterwards the imagination of the people went back, and saw the heavens opened and a dove descending, and he was recognized in some peculiar sense as the beloved Son of God.

But he was beloved son enough in being a noble, enthusiastic young man. He takes up the message of John after the caprice of Herod has beheaded him, and proclaims that the kingdom of God is at hand.

I love this enthusiasm of the young: it is

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the mainspring and motive force of the world. Here is this young man of thirty standing against the prejudices of his people, standing in the face of the omnipotence of Rome, standing in the face of countless hordes of heathendom that stretch farther than his youthful imagination ever travelled; and in the presence of it all he proclaims the immediate coming of an ideal kingdom, a time when all the world shall be fair and sweet and true.

Young men are always doing this; and old men are always shaking their heads, sometimes in mockery, sometimes in sadness and pity, but always with incredulity. They say the young man means well, but the forces against him are too great, and by and by he will be broken and discouraged, like the rest of us. That is the way old age generally looks upon this youthful enthusiasm.

But think for a moment how the young man looks at it. He says, This is palpably true; and of course people want the truth; all they need is to have it pointed out. But he finds afterwards, as I found in my young manhood, that sometimes the last thing that people want is the truth.

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I remember a day when the leading man in wealth and influence in my church—it was in the days of my orthodoxy—said squarely and frankly to me, “I have been trained in the old ideas; and, even if they are not true, I do not want to find it out.”

So the young man learns in sadness that the enthusiastic reception of the truth is not to be generally expected.

There is some great reform that needs to be carried out, just as in the case of young Garrison in Boston. Why, he said, this slavery is plainly wrong; and of course all good people will join in putting an end to it so soon as they wake up to see it as it is. But the result with him was that with a rope around his neck he was dragged through the streets of Boston by the representative and respectable men.

They did not want the reform. Too many selfish interests depended upon the continuance of the old condition of things.

And so, as we see here in this city of New York, one goes and studies the tenement districts, and it looks to him as though all he needed to do was to tell the people

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about it and the sore would be eradicated and healed; but nobody pays any attention.

I was reading only last night of the conditions under which the children of sunny Italy are manufacturing the flowers that go to decorate the bonnets of the women of New York and of the country. Eight, ten, fifteen people in two or three little rooms, the largest of which is perhaps ten feet square,—no light, no decent air to breathe, poor food, and a pitiful pittance of a few cents a day as wage.

It would seem as though the women who rush by crowds whenever a bargain is advertised would only need to know a fact like this, and clean and healthful and hopeful conditions would be created, and little children, who never run and play, and never sing, and never amuse themselves, would be given an opportunity for light and air and childhood.

The young man appears in his enthusiasm, and proclaims these things; but the old world, like a juggernaut, simply moves on, crushing by its wheels the helpless and the hopeless, old and young.

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But if it be true that right is “forever on the scaffold” and wrong “forever on the throne,”—if it be true,—then it is also true that

“That scaffold sways the Future, and, behind the
dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch
above his own.”

“Forever the right comes uppermost, and ever is justice done;” and it is the enthusiasm of the young Christ that does it. He is put to death. He fails, but it is remembered; and the world takes at least a little step ahead, and other young men kindle the torch of their enthusiasm at the embers of that which the world has heedlessly or purposely tried to trample out.

It is the enthusiasms of the young men, perpetually reborn, as new stars appear every night to light the darkness,—it is this ever perpetually recurring enthusiasm which ultimately redeems the world; and so it is this enthusiastic young prophet at Jordan,—this is the Christ I love.

I see him again; and now he is the

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patient, gentle, loving preacher and friend, walking with his disciples through the fields and by the common roadways of Galilee, sitting on the mountain side or by the edge of the lake.

He is going about doing good. He makes himself of no reputation. He is gentle with the ignorance of those that are about him.

One of the most wonderful things about the character of Jesus to me is to see how patient he is with stupidity. His disciples hardly ever understand him when he is giving utterance to any profound spiritual truth; but he always makes allowance for them.

And when they are weary, and cannot watch with him, he says, Well, the spirit is willing; it is the flesh that is weak. And, then, he is so tender towards people that go astray on account of their weakness and their temptations. I think one of the most wonderful things in all the world is to note the fact that Jesus is never severe against natural, human, fleshy sins.

I will tell you in a minute what he was severe about; but it was not this.

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It is typical of him,—that story, though it has perhaps no historic basis, of how the woman who was a sinner was brought to him for judgment; and he stooped down and wrote with his finger in the sand. Then her accusers recounted her crime, and said: What do you propose to do about it? Moses ordered that she should be stoned. Jesus went on writing. He said, Well, stone her, if you will: only let the one who has never committed a sin cast the first stone. And he goes on writing.

Pricked to the heart by these simple words, they gradually slink away, until, when Jesus looks up, he is standing alone with the woman; and he says: Where are thy accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

There was the Jesus who was the friend of publicans, the friend of sinners, whose heart was one spring and fountain of sympathy and helpful love. Away there, nineteen hundred years ago, he taught the lesson that it was not the business of society to take vengeance, to vindicate the majesty of anybody's law, that it was not the business of

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society to try to measure the quantity of a person's sin and meet out adequate punishment. The business of everybody was to try to help the sinner and save him from his sin.

That was Jesus' method. And, behold! after nineteen hundred years the penal legislation of the world is just beginning to wake up here and there to the idea that it is worth while to try to save the criminal instead of merely to crush him.

This Jesus, then, so tender with ignorance, so patient with stupidity, so kindly towards weakness, so ready to lift up and help and save,—this is the Christ I love.

Another phase of his character. It is said that he—and that cannot be true unless he was a man—was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin. He was tempted. Tell me that God was tempted, and I know it is pretence; for the Scripture says, as well as reason, "God cannot be tempted of evil." Of course, he cannot: he sees and understands. It is only a man who can be tempted; and it is a pretence to say that a man is tempted by something he does not want, tempted by the possibility of something that he does not desire to do.

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If Jesus never wanted to do wrong, then he was never tempted. But, if temptation appealed to him; the sense of power; if the flesh with its stinging, keen appetites and appeals for delight,—if this was real with him; if whatever men had ever desired to do he could sympathize with,—then it may be true that he was tempted in all points like as we are.

But the glory, the beauty, the hope of it for us, is not that he went through the appearance of being tempted,—for that would be no comfort or help to us,—but that he really was tempted, and that he climbed up on the temptation and made it a stepping-stone to self-conquest; that he was a man tempted, and yet a man victorious, a man triumphant.

If a man could do it, then I can. If a god could do it, what is that to me, not being a god? But, if a man be tempted and win, walk clean and sweet and true and noble through the world, harming none, helping all, then I can at least hopefully make the attempt.

This, then, the Christ who was tempted and who conquered, is the Christ I love.

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I said a moment ago that he showed another side of his character. He was no weakling. He was no emaciated, bloodless, pulseless appearance of a man. He was angry; and his anger blazed and cut and burned—against what, against whom?

The weak, the poor, the tempted, the down-trodden? No. Against intellectual sins, against the respectable, against the pretentious, against those who set themselves up as patterns and rulers and guides of his people.

He went into the temple, you remember, and overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves, blasted them with his scorn, and said, My Father's house has been called the house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of thieves; and he drove them with a whip of cords from the courts they defiled.

And he illustrated the same temper when dealing with certain scribes and Pharisees. Not that he condemned all scribes and Pharisees; he tells which ones he condemns,—Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites: You bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, and then never touch them

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with one of your fingers; you devour widows' houses, and make long prayers; you take your property, and then nominally turn it over to the Lord, so that you may be under no apparent obligation to look after those rightly dependent on you; you make a show of your religion, a sham.

I sometimes wish that we might have an hour of this Christ in the temple, in this modern world. When I see men in high places, bishops and leaders, who tell you in private what they believe, but never tell their people; when I see religion turned into a spectacle and a show, and charity and tenderness and manliness and help forgotten; when I see wealthy women, instead of seeking religion in the Church, hunting through its consecrated doors an avenue into "good society;" when I see the Church thus turned from its ideals; when I see men who, I know, have got a new and white light that shines out of the future, but which they do not follow; when I hear men say, as I have heard, "What I believe in my study is one thing: what I think it is wise to give the people is another thing,"—when I see this, then I wish for the

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Christ with the whip of small cords, that he might cleanse the courts of his Father's house and make it once more the house of humble prayer for all people.

In this mood, then, this is the Christ I love.

Once more, the Christ who wins my uttermost worship and reverence and regard is the Christ who all through his life was faithful to his truth. Early in his ministry we find that his brethren did not believe on him. That did not make any difference: he was still true. We find that his disciples misunderstood him: he was still true. We find that many, after he had spoken some critical, crucial word, were offended, and went back and walked no more with him. Still, he was true to his convictions.

We find him at Jerusalem, with all the authority of the ages of the consecrated past against him. Still, he listens for the new word, and goes out like his father Abraham, not knowing whither it might lead, only anxious to know that it was the voice of God.

Most of us can bear a little controversy,

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most of us can suffer being called by some unpleasant epithet; but, when it comes to physical harm, how many of us would go forward? Cranmer was tried, and recanted. Galileo knelt, and took back what he believed to be true. Let us not find fault with them. Who of us would have done any better? Thank God, I have never been put to the test.

But, when Jesus faced it, he did not shrink. He knew what was coming. He needed no supernatural revelation. He read it on the faces of the people in Jerusalem. He had attacked the temple, the old religion, and had prophesied that it must pass away. He knew what that meant. So he had his hour in Gethsemane, when sweat like drops of blood fell from him. His disciples got too weary to watch with him; but he forgave them, and watched alone.

Then came the arrest, the trial before Pilate, the opportunity to escape by a word; but no. Then the sentence to the cross; and he goes out from the city, dragging the weary load of the tree on his shoulder until he faints and falls. Then he is hung up between earth and heaven, and weary hour

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after weary hour goes by, and no angel appears, and there is no voice out of the heavens; and he, being man, wonders if, after all, he has been right, if he is fighting the battle of God for man.

But whether any angel wing is seen or not, whether any whisper of the Divine, being the man he was, he must stand true to his conviction to the last; and, though he cries out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—he had expected others to; but why dost thou?—still, he does not shrink. He holds by his truth until he swoons into unconsciousness; and it is over.

They do not break his legs, as they do ordinary criminals, because they find that he is already dead. Dead, and the priests were contented, and Rome was quiet; and yet the “dead” Christ who died for his truth was mightier than the omnipotence of Rome, mightier than all the heathendoms that had ever dominated the races of the past.

The “dead” Christ is coming to rule the fortunes of the world; and this, the Christ who was true to the uttermost, is the Christ I love.

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Not the Christ of the Nicene Creed; not that terrible Christ of Angelo's "Last Judgment," sitting on a throne, pursuing his enemies with his thunderbolts down to the lowest deeps of hell; not the metaphysical fraction of God embodied in the creeds,—the human Christ, the Christ born in Nazareth, the Christ who lived the beautiful life of a boy, the young, enthusiastic Christ, who believed in his dreams, in the kingdom that still shall come, and which he has done more than any one else to help come.

The Christ of the waysides, gentle and patient, the friend of publicans and sinners; the Christ conquering himself, and so getting fit to conquer the world.

The Christ holding the leaders of his people sternly to their professions; the Christ ready to face death for his truth; the Christ who was the son of God; the Christ who is my brother; the Christ who is the ideal which we still follow, and which is to lead us until his dreams come true,—this is the Christ I love.

THE HEAVEN WE HOPE FOR

III.

THE HEAVEN WE HOPE FOR.

If there is any one thing of which it may be truly said that all men everywhere and always have believed, it is that death is not the end of personal existence. Of course, occasional exceptions are not denied. As a general truth, however, the statement I have made is based upon evidence which cannot be challenged.

Considering this fact, however, and considering that in ancient Egypt the belief in another world was as real and practical as was the belief in this, the attitude of Moses and the teaching of the books called by his name are very strange.

“Moses” does not definitely or clearly teach any future life at all. The rewards and the punishments spoken of in the books of Moses concern themselves exclusively with this life. Indeed, there is no clear teaching of continued existence after death

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anywhere in the Old Testament. There is no place where the word "heaven" has any reference to a place of abode for the blessed spirits who have left this life. There is no place where the word "hell" has any reference to the place where the wicked are supposed to go after death.

And yet there are indications all the way through of what was undoubtedly a fact,—that some sort of dim belief in this direction was common in the popular mind. How else shall we interpret the story of the witch of Endor, for example, and the calling up of the spirit of the prophet Samuel? How else shall we understand the prohibition directed against having any commerce with familiar spirits?

Ignored completely in any direct and definite teaching in the Old Testament, yet the belief, as in some crude way existing in the popular mind, is everywhere apparent.

But we are not to think of it as at all like any belief which exists to-day. The underworld was a dim, cavernous sort of place beneath the surface of the earth. The spirits of the dead which had gone down there con-

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tinued in a state unconscious or only semi-conscious.

In some places in the Old Testament the existence of any kind of life after death is explicitly denied. This of course you can understand easily enough when you remember that the books of the Old Testament, like the books of the New, were written by different men, from different points of view, and holding divergent opinions.

I want to ask you to notice a few hints as to the thought of some of the Old Testament writers:—

In the First Book of Samuel, the twenty-eighth chapter and fourteenth and fifteenth verses, you will find an intimation as to how the people thought of it in connection with the calling up of the spirit of Samuel. He seems to resent having been disturbed, as though he had been in a condition of rest or half-sleep and did not like to be awakened.

In the Book of Job, at the tenth chapter, from the nineteenth to the twenty-first verses, we find a statement like this: “I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

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Are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death.”

You see there was nothing whatever vivid, lifelike, attractive about this underworld to the writer of Job.

The author of Ecclesiastes denies continued personal existence utterly. Take this passage from the third chapter, the eighteenth to the twenty-first verses: “I said in my heart it is because of the sons of men that God may prove them, and that they may see that they themselves are but as beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as one dieth, so dieth the other; they have all one breath; and man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”

There is an instructive and significant passage in Isaiah, fourteenth chapter, ninth to eleventh verses. The prophecy is directed against the King of Babylon, and it repre-

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sents him in this way. It says: "Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations, and they shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to hell, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee."

You see that is not a very cheerful or vivid picture of the kind of life that the great kings who had died in the past had entered upon.

There is, however, in one of the Psalms, the sixteenth, and tenth verse, a hint, at least in certain exceptional cases, of another idea. The writer says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption."

This indicates precisely what we have a right to expect. We find what we should look for,—a growth, a change in regard to the popular conceptions of this other life. Up to the time of Jesus, it is worth your while

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to note, only two persons in all human history are spoken of as having gone to heaven; that is, to the place where God holds his court. These were Enoch and Elijah; and they had been taken up into heaven very much as some demigod or hero in the old classic ages had been rewarded for some special deed, and received into Olympus.

Nobody else had gone to heaven: all had gone down into this underworld; and at first, and for hundreds of years, there was no separation in this underworld between the good and the bad. But by the time of Jesus this separation had been imagined. It was divided into Paradise and Gehenna, a place for the blessed, a place for the wicked. But it was only to be after the resurrection, the resurrection of the body, that any one was to escape from this underworld.

You see how little conception existed in those times of any heaven of which we dream or for which we are accustomed to hope.

I wish now to picture to you as briefly and clearly as I can the kind of anticipation which Paul had in mind; and note, it is not Paul's heaven that to-day we hope for. What does Paul say?

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It seems it was the popular belief at that time that Jesus was to return from heaven, and establish his new kingdom before any of the saints should die. But some members of the church in Thessalonica sent word to Paul asking, what does it mean,—people are dying; these church members are dying, and the Christ has not come, and the kingdom has not been revealed: are they to be lost?

And in Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians he corrects what he regards as their misconception. He says, Those saints that die are not to have any advantage over those that remain until Christ comes. For Paul believed, you see, that Christ was to come before all of that day died. He said, This is what is going to happen: the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the saints who have died will be raised from their graves, and the bodies of those that have not died will be suddenly, miraculously changed, and we shall all rise together to meet the Lord in the air, and so be forever in his presence. This is Paul's expectation.

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It was believed by the early Church in general that Jesus was to come and establish his kingdom with its capital at Jerusalem, and reign on earth in millennial glory for at least a thousand years; and there are traditional words which have been placed on the lips of Jesus himself, giving most extravagant descriptions of the condition of things which were to exist during that millennial period.

If it is not the heaven of Paul that we to-day hope for, it is certainly not the heaven of the old Church Father Tertullian. He died near the middle of the third century. He has left his ideas on record. His heaven is the place where the few saints are to be gathered; and he expects to look over the battlements, and exult and rejoice to see his enemies burning in the flames of torment. This is his conception. Certainly it is not that we hope for.

Is it the heaven of Dante? I have said before—it may be because of some defect in my mental make-up—that I have never been able to get interested in Dante's heaven. I am interested, painfully interested, in his

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hell. I am a little less interested in his Purgatory. I find it almost impossible to get through his Paradise.

There is nothing whatever in it as he described it which appeals to me,—nothing living, nothing human, nothing that I should care to see or care to do. Certainly, it is not this,—being a part of a celestial rose made up of the saints, and spending thousands of years in wrapt gaze upon the beatific vision. This is not the heaven I hope for.

Neither is it the heaven of Jonathan Edwards or of our Puritan forefathers. This was a place shut off, separated from all except those who had been elected, chosen from the foundation of the world—a place of ages of psalm-singing, of harp-playing, of praise. You remember how it used to be set forth in the hymns; and I remember with what dreadful anticipation I looked forward to it as a sort of eternal Sabbath,

“Where congregations ne’er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end.”

Here, again, it lacks, to my mind, anything attractive, anything human, anything that

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we could naturally long for or care to do. And then, again, Edwards—saint, tender-hearted himself, noble, consecrated man,—he tried to teach and to believe that the saints would get so in perfect accord with the mind of God, and would so ratify his just decrees against the sinner, that the eternal sight of the torment whose smoke should ascend forever and ever would add to the ineffable joy of heaven.

This is the picture of Jonathan Edwards; this is the Puritan's heaven. It certainly is not that which to-day we hope for.

Almost throughout the Christian centuries the belief in the literal resurrection of these bodies which we wear to-day has been an essential part of the creed. Even since I have been in New York an Episcopal clergyman in one of the cities in New Jersey wrote me, commenting upon a statement I had made that this belief was passing away, declaring his conviction that no man had a right to be a minister of the Church of God who did not believe in the literal resurrection of the body.

This, I say, has been a part of the almost

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universal and age-long creed. That, beside the scientific conceptions of the modern world, is simply becoming unbelievable. If we exist at all, death itself is only another kind of birth. We pass through the gateway, we enter upon that other life—what? Precisely what we are at the moment of our entry. There is nothing whatever in death to produce any change in character or capacity or taste, any more than there is in passing through the doorway of a church on Sunday. When we go out into the street, we shall be what we were before we went. When we pass through the gateway we call Death into that other country, we shall be just what we have become up to the time of our passing through.

The heaven we hope for then—and now I wish to note a few considerations concerning it—is not an exclusive heaven. I do not believe that there is any place in the universe where any one man is admitted that will not freely open to any other man, provided he can enter; and that “can” means simply capacity, character, taste, means no shut door, means no bar set up by the power of

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a judgment, or any supposed justice, of God.

Here is passage from a part of a liturgy of one of the Buddhistic sects in China:—

“Never will I seek or receive private, individual salvation; never will I enter into final peace alone; but forever and ever and everywhere I will live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all the worlds.”

If anybody tells me that that is not Christian, then I will say that I prefer Paganism.

Were the gate of heaven open at my feet, and all the unimaginable glory inviting, and I was told that one poor sinner, the wickedest man that ever lived, was forever to be shut out, I hope I should have grace enough to say: Then I will stay out with him. I will never enter any heaven from which any seeking, lost soul is forcibly debarred.

The heaven I hope for, then, has no gates that are ever to be shut. It is wide open with loving, tender, tearful, pleading welcome for every child of God.

Remember, let me say incidentally right here, that there may be wanderers for thousands of years; but, if there are, it will not

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be God's fault. I have said, for example, that I cannot conceive of any child of mine ever becoming or ever doing anything so that I would shut the door in his or her face. But it might be years, and the door standing open, and they would not come.

The heaven we hope for, then, is no exclusive place. It is wide open for every son and every daughter of God.

Another point: the heaven we hope for is not essentially a place. That thought of course is familiar, has been made so during the last few years; and yet it was believed for hundreds of years that it was a definite place, with gates and bars, and that everybody inside must be happy and everybody outside must be miserable.

But it requires only the most superficial thought for us to understand that a location, material surroundings,—that these things have no power to create either happiness or misery. We know, for example, that some of the most beautiful parts of this planet of ours are inhabited by some of the most degraded and miserable specimens of the race. The place does not mean civilization,

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does not mean culture, does not mean development, does not mean appreciation of high and fine things.

Though so many of us strive after money as though it contained in itself the potentiality of every conceivable good, we know perfectly well that it is not true. We know men who have built themselves beautiful houses who are lonely and miserable in the libraries, the dining-rooms, the parlors. We know perfectly well that there are people with almost nothing in cottages, in quiet places, without reputation, who live lives of peace and satisfaction and joy.

As a boy I used to imagine that, if I could only get into heaven, that would be all that any one need to desire; but I have learned something a little deeper and more reasonable than that in these later years. There must be something of balance and proportion and relationship between the person and the place. Some men would be happy for a year shut up, turned loose, so to speak, amid the treasures of the British Museum: other people would regard it as a prison.

There are those who long for the fields,

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who love to study the flowers, who would be perfectly happy with the hammer of a geologist, but who have no taste for the seclusion of libraries. Some people would be happy at Bayreuth by the year, listening to the magnificent music of the great master. There are others, and some of the noblest men of the world, who have simply no taste for music. It would become weariness to them in a day.

So we understand perfectly well that the place cannot make the heaven. It is something a little deeper than that. We will come to it by and by. But, as I have described it, we all enter into that world; and there is no dividing line. What is to keep the bad people from coming into our society?

I speak of this, though the question seems almost childish, because I have had it asked me a great many times. Would the bad people take possession of things and destroy all our happiness? They do not do it in this world. I have never been troubled for any great length of time with the enforced companionship of people I did not want.

If you leave people free, they seek their own kind; and, if there were a heaven such

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as has been pictured in the traditions of the church, and the gates were left open, nobody would enter except those who liked it. They would seek the scenes and associations which matched their thought, their feeling, their desires.

What do I think this heaven is to be? I said a moment ago that, as it is pictured by Dante and by the old Puritan fathers, there are no occupations that seem to me attractive. Why should we not believe that heaven is more like this earth than we ordinarily imagine? There are certain of our faculties and powers that are so intimately bound up with our present physical bodies that we cannot imagine ourselves as carrying them along with us. But what do we carry?

The things that are essentially ourselves,—thought, feeling, imagination,—all our intellectual powers. Will Michel Angelo never carve another statue? Will Raphael never paint another picture? Will Shakespere never write another play? Will Wagner compose no more music? Will the geologist find no field for study in the construction and growth of worlds? Will the chem-

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ist find nothing to occupy him in investigating the secrets of the composition of this marvellous universe? Will the astronomer have no field for his researches?

Why, it seems to me that it would be no heaven at all if those things that make us men and women, what we are, did not have free and wide and grand scope for their exercise. So the heaven I hope for is a heaven of work, a heaven of occupation, a heaven of study, a heaven of travel, of music, of art, of literature, of painting,—of all those things that we begin here, all that we have to leave broken off in the middle.

An old gentleman said not a great while ago,—and I suppose it has been said by a thousand others,—as he faced some new discovery: “Just think of that! How I would like to be here twenty-five years from now, and see what has happened by that time!”

The last hundred years have been marvellous in their development. Think of it! My father was born in the year 1794. No man on earth at that day could travel any faster than Abraham could, or get his news any quicker. All the things that have revolution-

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ized the world have taken place since my father was born; and we are only on the edge of it, we are just beginning. How we should love to see what is coming!

Why should we not? Why should we not be able to study, to discover, to help on the processes of this marvellous growth, and rejoice in seeing the world that God and we together have made?

Is the life over there going to be without any effort? People sometimes talk as though they wanted to sit down and rest forever and ever. Is it eternal rest? If it is eternal rest, I do not want to go. It would be eternal ennui. Eternal activity, and activity of a kind that does not always see the end. I do not believe that heaven is a place where we are going to get everything we wish simply by turning our hand over. If it is, I should not want to be there.

Some of the sweetest moments of this world at any rate are those when, after planning and laboring and waiting, at last we grasp, achieve,—the ecstasy, the triumph of overcoming obstacles, solving problems, conquering difficulties!

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Is heaven to be easy and immediate and perfect achievement? I do not believe it for one moment. I believe it is to be a human place. I pity people who have nothing more to look forward to. A young friend of mine once told me that she could never remember the time when she could not have anything she wanted. I pitied her. I pity her still.

It seems to me that the zest of existence must have very much gone out when you reach a point where there are no surprises, no efforts, and no conquests.

And is it to be a place entirely without a shadow or a pain? I do not believe that either. Perhaps some may be surprised at the kind of heaven I am hoping for. But let me illustrate what I mean:—

Here are thousands of people every day pouring through the gateways into that other land; and what are they? Are they all wise, all good, all happy? No. They are foolish, and they are bad, and they are miserable,—thousands of them; and they are not going to an eternal place of torment and they are not going at once to eternal felicity, because in the nature of things they could not.

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They are going to need, they are going to wander, they are going to suffer, they are going to want teaching and guidance and help, they are going to call for pity, for sympathy, for aid. And true, noble, loving, tender hearts are going to feel pity, are going to suffer for them and with them, and help redeem and deliver them.

I would not respect myself if I were not ready for work like that. I would not respect you if you were not ready, either. So I do not expect a heaven of eternal rest, of seclusion, of aloofness from any human need or suffering or sorrow.

It will be different from the sorrow here, because it will be shot through with light and illumined by an eternal hope. But it will be suffering and sympathy, and will call on us for aid.

But the great thing that I hope for, hope for so much that the rest of it does not matter a great deal, is friends and the companionship of the loved ones. That is what makes heaven; it makes it here, and it will make it there; and it does not make much difference what the external conditions are.

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I hear persons now and then trying to comfort one who has lost a friend; and they say, You must not mourn: this friend who has died is better off. Suppose the friend that has died is better off: that is not complete comfort to me.

If you could assure me that my boy is to be in eternal felicity somewhere, live in a palace surrounded by everything that imagination can conceive, and that I am to live in another palace, surrounded by everything that I can dream of, somewhere else,—if you assure me that, would you think you were offering me comfort? You would be putting to my lips a cup of bitterness unspeakable.

I do not want the one I love perfectly happy in one place and myself perfectly happy in another: that would be a contradiction in terms. Let me have the one I love by my side, then give me poverty, give me sickness, give me struggle, give me anything; and I choose it rather than eternal felicity alone.

Do you know I have always half imagined that Dante did not have only pity for Paolo

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and Francesca. I know they are in the Inferno; but they love each other with a perfect love, and they are together.

I would rather be in any hell that any power in this universe can send me to with the one I love for companion than to be in any heaven that the imagination of man ever dreamed about and be—alone.

The thing we long for then, the heaven we hope for, means the friends that are dear to us and the loved ones that are closest. We say, "God is love:" we know that heaven is love; and we know that this is the one thing about which we chiefly care,—that you who have lost a wife may find her, that you who have lost a son may find him, that you who have lost a daughter may find her, that you who have lost a husband may find him.

Are not these the central things in the heaven you hope for? I am flooded with letters from all over this world, from people who say to me: I have lost such and such a friend. If I could only know that that friend lives and loves and cares for me, and that some time I shall find him or her again, nothing else would matter. That is

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the deepest thing in the human heart, the deepest thing in life, and the highest thing in the heaven we hope for.

I have already said that I do not believe in any heaven whose gates were shut. And yet let me suggest to you just here at the end that heaven is something that cannot be arbitrarily bestowed, something that cannot be arbitrarily taken away, something that cannot be conferred by a change of location.

Poetry is in the eye, in the heart. Beauty is in the power to perceive. The capacity for finding heaven is the one important thing about it all. You may change your place of abode, wander from star to star: you may travel for thousands of years seeking for peace; but you carry yourself with you everywhere, and in that self you carry your heaven or your hell. It is inevitable.

No devil can create a hell for you, no God can create a heaven for you. You must make your own heaven. There is no use in hoping for it until you begin to make it. You can make it here as well as anywhere else; and a good time to begin making it is now.

THE HELL WE FEAR

IV.

THE HELL WE FEAR.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

I suppose all of us think we believe this. As a matter of fact, we do not. We accept the statement as touching matters of agriculture. Of course, we know that, if we plant potatoes, potatoes will grow; if we sow wheat, we shall get a harvest of wheat; if we do not plant anything, nothing will grow except weeds, the natural products of the soil.

This is all perfectly clear. Nobody doubts it as touching this department of life. But there is hardly a week goes by in which some one does not ask me a question showing plainly that he does not understand this law as pertaining to other departments of life. I find people every little while very much astonished that a certain crop grows,—a moral crop, a crop of happiness or misery;

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and yet, when I look into their lives, I find that they have been planting that crop for a good many years; but they are very much surprised that it has sprung up.

It is one of the commonest experiences of my life to have people say to me, in effect: I have tried to be a good and honest man; and yet I have not got on in the world. Here is somebody who, as far as I can see, is not specially honest, but who has prospered. And they think they have brought a charge against the justice of the universe; that is, they seem to imagine that God has somehow pledged himself to pay cash for good behavior. I do not know of any such promise. I do not know of any causal connection between the two.

Another thing: Every little while somebody is expressing his surprise at the method of divine government because sorrow or sickness, some trouble, comes upon a friend or upon himself; and he says: I have tried to be good. I wonder why God treats me so. Again, you see, no sort of perception of this law of cause and effect.

So, as I said, the law is not generally

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understood, and is not considered to be generally applicable to all the affairs of human life. I think in the light of it, however, we shall come upon, as the result of our investigations, the only real hell that we need to fear. We shall also come upon the path that leads to the only heaven that we can hope to attain.

I have no fear, at any rate,—I speak for myself,—of the old-time hell, which was located in and supposed to be confined to the other world. It has been imagined under a thousand diverse forms; but it is not that hell of which I am afraid.

Neither am I afraid of any prison-house in the other world in which either I or anybody else is supposed to be in danger of being confined. But this is believed by a great many.

Neither am I afraid of any hell which is created positively, purposely, arbitrarily, on the part of God. I am not afraid of any purposed, arbitrary infliction of punishment or pain in this world or any other.

In the centres of culture and refinement it is popularly supposed that these old-time

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ideas are outgrown. We deceive ourselves, if we think they are. There is not a country in Christendom where the old ideas are not still preached concerning this hell which is supposed to be the arbitrary infliction of divine punishment in another life as a penalty for the deeds done in the body.

I know that people are inclined to throw it off. Whittier spoke for thousands when he said, pleadingly, tenderly, to the brethren who reproached him for giving up his old ideas,—

“My human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds;
Against the words ye bid me speak
The heart within me pleads.”

Whittier, I say, in these words speaks for thousands; and there is no sort of question that the vital belief in this sort of hell is dying out. But some one last week, probably in anticipation of this topic, sent me the report of a sermon recently preached just across the river, in which all these old ideas of hell are explicitly and definitely proclaimed. It was said even that, if we have prisons like Sing Sing in this world, why

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should not God have hells in which to shut up the wicked in the next world?

I refer to this merely to show that these ideas have not all died out.

But, as a matter of fact, just as fast and just as far as men become even partially civilized, just so fast and just so far the continued holding of these conceptions of sin and punishment, of a wrathful God, become utterly impossible.

These fancies, these imaginings, are like the spectre of the Brocken. It is said that travellers in the Alps sometimes find their own images in certain conditions of the atmosphere projected upon the clouds; and in the old days they were supposed to be some terrible spectre, quite apart from the simple human cause of their existence.

So people have projected their own horrible thoughts, feelings, revenges, cruelties, against the sky, and have mistaken the images of their own barbarity for God.

The God of these old-time fancies is just as much worse, as much more inhuman, as much more cruel, unrighteous, immoral, than

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any man that ever lived as you can possibly imagine; for he is the one that

“...made us, foredoomed us,
And does what He wills with His own,”

in the words of Tennyson.

These horrors are passing away. But note one thing: they still remain imbedded, either explicitly or by implication, in every one of the old historical creeds. I am aware of the fact that there are thousands of ministers who no longer preach these ideas; but they are in the creeds of the Dutch Reformed, the Lutheran, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Episcopal Churches, all. And I challenge the intelligence and the conscience of the age with this statement,—either these things are true or they are not true.

They are not sort of true, half-true, true as it were, true in a way: they are true or they are not. And, if they are true, they ought to be preached by every minister in every pulpit every week of every year.

If the human race is fronting a destiny like this, it ought to know it. If the ministers believe it and do not preach it, they are

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unspeakably false,—false to God, false to truth, false to the welfare of human souls.

Let them make up their minds, then! and if it is not true and if the ministers know it is not true, then they ought to tell their people that, and they ought to find out what is the real hell that people ought to fear, and help them escape it. We ought to know the truth in regard to such tremendous issues as this, and face it fearlessly and frankly.

The late Phillips Brooks challenged the ministers of his own denomination by saying to them, There are a good many of us who know and believe certain things about the Bible which we do not tell our people. Is it not true that there are a good many who know or believe certain things in regard to the hells and the heavens of this world and the next which they do not tell their people?

Lift off the false burdens, and lay on the brains and hearts of men the loads which they really ought to carry. What is a ministry for if it is not to tell the truth? I am ashamed sometimes because somebody compliments me as being brave enough to say

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what I think. What is a minister for but to say what he thinks? He is too contemptible for any name if he says what he does not think or if he declines to say what he does.

It is none of these hells, then, that we fear. And all ministers to-day are intelligent enough to know that they can find out the reality. The light is available. Let us, then, face the issues.

What is it that we fear? I sometimes hear Unitarians, liberals, spoken of as though they preached an easy kind of gospel, an easy salvation. If however you will follow me until I am through, you will discover, I think, that we preach the very hardest salvation that there is on the face of the earth, the most difficult heaven to find, the most difficult hell to escape. The ordinary salvation offered us by the churches is cheap and easy in comparison.

According to the old doctrine the world suffered on account of Adam's sin. It is sometimes said to us that our law of heredity is just as cruel as was that old idea; and it is, except for one thing. Those who believe

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that we are to suffer eternally in hell on account of Adam's sin believe that the penalty is to be arbitrarily inflicted at the moment of death, and that there is to be no escape from it.

We do believe—we know as a matter of scientific demonstration—that the children suffer for the sins of the fathers, that we are enmeshed in a tangle of inheritance, and that, as a result of it, we find hells innumerable whose pains we must face and bear.

But it is not arbitrary, and there is not a dead-line at the point where we pass from this world into the next; and there is endless opportunity for working out of it and helping others to work out. That is the difference between the law of heredity and the doctrines of the fall and punishment of the race on account of the sin of Adam.

There are hells numberless in which we suffer as the result of heredity. Here is a man whose father broke some physical law, and who is punished for it his whole life long. Perhaps he has gout or rheumatism or an impaired digestion from which he can never escape.

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Here is a man who has not inherited drunkenness, but a constitution that is inflammable in the presence of temptation and easily leads to drunkenness.

Here is a person who has not inherited consumption, but a consumptive tendency; that is, he becomes an easy victim when the conditions are fit.

Here is a person who has inherited a weak will, an irascible temper, an inclination to be sensuous, as was said was the case with Socrates.

So in every direction we have inherited hells in which we burn and suffer as the result not of our own sins. But there is another side to it. It is not as unjust and hopeless as it would at first appear. We have inherited tendencies for good, moral, spiritual power, splendid constitutions. We have inherited impulses towards the right and the beautiful and the good; and, although we are all linked together in this way, the good and the bad together, so that humanity is one organism, and one member cannot suffer without the rest suffering, and one member cannot rejoice without the rest par-

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icipating in the joy, we are able under the law of cause and effect to deliver ourselves from the burdens of these evils, to work our way out, to

“Rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves,”

and to reach on to a point where the whole creation shall by and by be redeemed from the travail and the burden and the sorrow and the woe.

Not only do we inherit these kinds of hells to which I have referred, we create hells,—create them here. Look out over the world, and see how many terrible hells there are that do not testify to any arbitrariness on the part of God, but which are a part of the eternal order of things. For remember,—and let me insert right here another consideration before I go on to deal with these hells which we needlessly create,—remember that we are in this world and in all worlds under a universal law, a changeless law of cause and effect.

The hell I fear is no arbitrary infliction: it is a result. The only heaven ever to be

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attained in this universe is a result: the only hell ever to be feared is a result. No devils make the hells, no angels make the heavens. God himself cannot interfere with this changeless and universal law.

Why? Because he is not outside of it, as though it were a mechanism that he could touch and make run some other way. God is in the mechanism, the heart, the life, the soul of it. What we call the mechanism of law is nothing in the world but God's habit of acting: It is God himself in eternal expression; and these are the inevitable conditions.

God cannot make a circle without having every part of the circumference at an equal distance from a point within called the centre. If he made something different from that, it would not be a circle. God cannot interfere with any of these laws that we have discovered to be the natural and necessary order of things, because they are the expression of himself, the eternal, wise, loving, just, changeless expression of himself.

So to plead with God to keep you from suffering the result of the breach, or the keeping, of one of his own laws, is not

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only useless, but it is an absurdity. It is pleading with God to go against himself.

I break a law of my body. I must suffer the penalty, whether I do it on purpose or carelessly or ignorantly: I must find out. I break a law of my mind. I must suffer the penalty. Or of my heart, my loving nature: I must suffer the penalty. I break a law of my moral nature: I must suffer the penalty. Or a law of my spiritual nature: I must suffer the penalty; and the penalty must be precisely adequate to the breach, and must last as long as the breach.

It is this hell which is the natural and necessary result of law-breaking that I fear.

Come now to consider the point I took up a moment ago. How many are the hells which we needlessly create? Look over the face of society. Visit Sing Sing. Go over on Blackwell's Island. Go into a saloon, an opium joint, a gambling den. Go into the hospitals. Go down among the stranded and hopelessly and viciously poor.

Now nearly every one of these hells which these words indicate we ourselves are responsible for. They are inevitable hells so long

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as we break the laws of life and justice and truth and love.

And how many hells there are that do not obtrude themselves in this way! Here are mothers, tender, loving mothers, whom their own boys push into and lock up in hell,—a hell created by their own viciousness, cruelty, ingratitude. They wring the mother's heart, which must suffer by as much as it is loving and tender.

Here are homes, or what look like homes on the outside where husbands and wives are in hell,—hells which they have created for themselves by jealousy, anger, discord of one kind or another.

Here is a man in his beautiful home. He is in hell because he is a disappointed man. He has aimed after some definite thing in life on which he set his heart; and, though he has gained a thousand other things, he has not gained that.

There are men and women whose lives and hearts are empty, who have found, as they have gone on in the world, that the beauty of the world has seemed to disappear. Their natures have shrunken, and earth

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seems to them a desert. They are in all the hell they would care to find.

There are hells created by envy, jealousy, hatred, by all sorts of excesses and evil passions. Let us not charge God with these. Let us not dare to bring them as indictments against his goodness and his judgments. Every one of them is the result of the breach of divine, perfect, just and loving laws on the part of ourselves.

I wish now to point out in two or three somewhat definite directions certain things that we do or certain things that we do not do to create the kinds of hell which we need to fear; and we do need to fear them. We are on the edge of them, a great many of us. One step over the border, and we are in the clutches of the malign forces, and a good many times hardly aware of it; and we think we are strong enough to do as we please, and we wake up and find that we are helpless.

Take those hells that come as the result of our cultivating persistently certain selfish, bad habits, giving way to certain indulgences. Take De Quincey as an illustration. Have

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you ever read his "Opium-eater"? Is there any hell to be imagined much worse than that which he endured as the result of becoming a victim to this drug?

Take the case of John B. Gough. I remember hearing him say that there was a time in his life when, if he had stood on the edge of a fiery stream, and floating on it was a bottle of whiskey, he would have plunged in for the sake of the drink, at the expense of no matter what cost to himself.

And did he enjoy it? Was it pleasant? Was he having a lovely time? He simply had become so completely in the grip of a demoniac power, which meant merely his own voluntary breach of divine laws, that he was in a hell from which for years he could not escape.

Take Rossetti, the famous poet and artist, for years in a drug-created hell, in which at last he died. These are merely illustrations: you can multiply them as much as you please. There are habits which we cultivate which are not so dramatic in their effects as these.

I know men who have cultivated nothing

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but a common, every-day kind of selfishness, who are miserable the year round because they have thus become victims of themselves. You knew men, you can see them every day on the street, you know how they get along in their homes,—people who have allowed themselves to become the victims of evil habits of one kind or another that are creating for them all the hells that they will ever need to discover in order to believe that misery is a reality in this universe.

Then there is another, just the opposite of this. There are thousands of people who are creating for themselves a sort of negative hell—and I shall try to make you feel in a moment that this is something terribly real—as the result of the atrophy of their faculties and powers.

We all of us have in us the germs, the possibilities, of unfolding in such a way as might bring us into vital and delighted contact with every phase of the universe. If we are properly developed, the world has a thousand fingers with which it touches and plays on the countless strings which make up our being.

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And the result is music,—that music which we call joy. But how many of these faculties and powers do we develop? I know people who by the time they are fifty or sixty years old have narrowed their lives down to the possibility of getting any satisfaction out of only one or two things.

I know of a man who said, as he got along in life, that the only real satisfaction to him was going down to his safe deposit box and cutting off coupons. That is what he had come to; that was the result of the shrinkage of his nature.

I know of a man in Boston, a millionaire: in his old age he was found down at the warehouse with his old clothes and an apron on, rolling about a barrel of molasses. And, when a friend remonstrated with him, saying that a man with all his money should spend his time some other way, he replied: You are not talking very much sense. As a matter of fact, I have just made three dollars and a half on that barrel; and it is about the only thing I take any satisfaction in. That is what he had come to.

You remember that eternal parable of

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Bunyan's, in the "Pilgrim's Progress" about a man with a muckrake stooping over the ground and scraping together the stones and rubbish, eager to see that none escaped him, and overhead was an angel holding out a crown, and the man did not know he was there, had not time to look up. If he had, perhaps he would not have recognized him.

Is there no hell in this kind of deprivation? You remember the old story in Homer, of how on his voyage Ulysses fell into the hands of the sorceress Circe, and his companions were turned into swine. Now they did not know that they were swine, I suppose. I meet people now who do not know it.

But was there no punishment about it because they did not know it? Was there no hell because they had forgotten that they were ever men? I think that is the worst hell of all. Let a physician go into a hospital and operate on a patient; and, if there is no suffering under the knife, he knows the case is hopeless. If the patient is capable of agony, he may get well.

So you take these people who are contented in their hells; and they are the most hopeless

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cases of all. Swedenborg had very keen insight as he described the other world as the result of what he claimed to be his visions and journeys through it. He said that there were certain people in hell who would never get out, simply because they had learned to like it and wanted to stay there. That is the most hopeless thing in the world. The danger is that we get so used to the evil that we are not conscious of it, and learn to like it and do not recognize the good.

You see a person born blind; and you pity him infinitely for what he cannot see. And how pathetic is a case like that of Helen Kellar! How the civilized world rejoices when one after another the avenues of intelligence are partly open, so that she can get a glimpse of the real world! Think of the countless appeals the infinite universe makes to us, and how we cultivate the ability to respond to so few of them!

Beware of this hell that results from the atrophy of your faculties and powers, and in which you become contented, so that you are willing to remain.

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Then there are hells,—I can only refer very briefly to some of these things,—there are hells, if we ever wake up to them, that we are creating by the evil we are doing to others. By and by, if we come to ourselves and look back and see, there will be keenness of suffering and regret that we can only partially at present understand.

Take the young man I referred to a little time ago. He has broken the heart of his mother by his conduct. He knew he was doing it; but he was passionate and reckless, and for the time did not care. But by and by the mother dies, and after a while he wakes up and becomes a decent man again; and he carries a grief gnawing at his heart by the year. How much he would give if he could only find her somewhere and tell her that he cares!

Those are very real hells to people who are men, who are women, who are true, who can appreciate and understand. Take the man who has ruined the life of a loving, trusting girl. He has reformed: he can go back into good society. She cannot: she drifts, flotsam and jetsam, on the turbulent

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stream of life, to plunge over the falls by and by into the abyss. As he sits years after in his luxurious home, with a wife who knows nothing about it and with children that he loves, and as one of his daughters grows up, and he begins to wonder what it would mean to have her treated in that way, do you not think there is a little hell for him?

And so in a hundred directions you can carry out the thought.

And, then, the contrary side,—the hells of regret for the things we might have accomplished, the cause we might have helped, the person we might have led, the difficulty we might have solved. The only way you can escape these hells will be by plunging into the deeper hells of indifference, and of the atrophy and dying out of your nobler powers.

But now I come to that which is central, crucial to the whole discussion. Every word you speak, every thought you think, every feeling you indulge, the entire course of your life, does two things. It not only flows out from you as an influence to touch and degrade or lift up other lives, but it is all

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the time making you,—making you what you are; and what you are determines what you can suffer, what you can accomplish, what you can enjoy.

You are making yourself, you are making your future; and, the results of the law-keeping or the law-breaking are inevitable, and they are just as enduring as the law-keeping and the law-breaking.

When will people escape from suffering? Will it be immediately after death? I do not know: it depends. Will it be in a hundred years? Will it be in a thousand, in a million? That depends.

Just so long as a man breaks a law, just so long the result of that breaking will appear, will follow him, will cripple him, will hang upon him, will hinder him, will give him sorrow. It is inevitable. God cannot have a thing be and not be in the same sense and at the same place and at the same time: it is a contradiction in terms.

So that here is the most tremendous thing that I could possibly put into words: Neither in this world nor in any other will you ever be able to escape yourselves. And you are

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making yourselves, by thought and word and conduct, every day, just what you are. You are on the down grade a little or on the up grade, which? You must determine: God cannot without your consent. He is ready to help you with all the power of his omnipotence, when you are ready to turn; but you cannot possibly escape yourselves.

I remember the late Colonel Ingersoll said a tremendous thing once, years ago. I use it as an illustration: it is capable of a thousand applications. He was speaking of the man who had not independence enough to be himself, who never dared to speak his own ideas or do what he believed to be right,—one of these negative, nerveless nonentities; and he said, It must be an awful thing for a man to wake up in the middle of the night, and be obliged to confess, after all, there is really nobody here in this bed.

What must it be for a man to wake up in the middle of the night, and be compelled to say, Though my wife does not know it and my friends do not know it, there is a scoundrel in this bed, there is a dishonest man in this bed, there is an unkind man in this bed,

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there is a cruel, contemptible cur that I am really obliged to loathe in this bed; but he is I, and I cannot get rid of him. There is the horror of it, the hell of it, in this world or in any other world.

There is an Eastern apologue. It tells of a soul just waked to consciousness after the swoon of death. He is fleeing along through the unaccustomed spaces there, and hears behind him the tread of footsteps, as if they were following; and he turns, and sees a frightful, hideous shape which fills him with horror, and he cries, What art thou? And the answer comes; I am thine own actions. Night and day I follow thee. That is the hell we need to fear.

And remember this last word at the end. It is not arbitrary. God is not doing it without your permission. You are doing it or you are not doing it. It is your own work, your heaven or your hell.

And remember you will never get into any more heaven in this world or any other than you first get into yourselves; and you will never escape any hell that you create yourself except as you work out of it by re-creat-

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ing your own thoughts and feelings and aspirations.

I said at the outset, and here I want to emphasize it and let you see how inevitable it is in the nature of things, that the old ecclesiastical method of salvation was cheap and easy compared with ours. Think of it. A man could lead the life of a selfish, bloody scoundrel all the way through, in the Middle Ages, and then call a priest, confess, receive absolution, and partake of the sacrament,—have some oil placed on his head, and it was all wiped out, and the gates of heaven would open to him; or, at the worst, he would have only a little preparatory stretch of purgatory.

Think how easy it all is, how cheap that kind of salvation. But think how absurd it is. They sing such hymns—I have heard them over and over again—as

“Nothing either great or small
Remains for me to do.
Jesus died and paid it all,—
Yes, all the debt I owe.”

Cheap and easy; for only a sacrament, only

HELL

a baptism, only an "I am awfully sorry," only a prayer, and the past is wiped out; and according to that theory the hundreds of persons you have wronged, perhaps, and sent to hell are not taken into account!

But think for a moment. Heaven cannot possibly exist except as you have cultivated a capacity to appreciate and enjoy heaven. Can you break into a Wagner's opera with a pickaxe or a club? You can get into the presence of the orchestra and see the actors and hear the sound; but it means appreciation, taste, years of cultivation, before you can really possess the opera.

Here is a man who finds great delight in botany and the beauty of a flower. Can somebody arbitrarily have injected into him, by opening a door where flowers are, that ability? Can you get it in that way? It means years of study, cultivation, power to appreciate.

Cannot you see? It seems to me so strange that people can think for an instant that it is arbitrary, that by an angel's opening a gate and letting me through into a certain place I can get into heaven, that by locking

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me up somewhere they are putting me in hell. Heaven and hell are something that I make for myself.

“Heaven but the vision of fulfilled desire,
And hell the shadow of a soul on fire.”

So says Omar Kháyyám.

“Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep,
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide.”

So sings Milton. They appreciated the great spiritual truth that we make both our heavens and our hells. And these hells that we make for ourselves and for others are the only ones we ever need to fear.

THE BIBLE WE ACCEPT

V.

THE BIBLE WE ACCEPT

We accept gladly and gratefully the Bible for what and all that it is. Whether we should accept the claims it might make for itself we do not know, because it does not make any claims at all.

I do not know whether the statement will seem strange to you; but the Bible nowhere claims to be inspired, it nowhere claims to be infallible. There are some of the writers in the Bible who claim to speak for God. You will find the phrase, for example, "Thus saith the Lord," preceding some of their utterances.

I remember that on at least one occasion—I do not remember chapter and verse—Paul claims to speak with authority of the Divine Spirit concerning a certain matter; but he does not make this claim often, and he does not make any general claim of the sort for all of his writings.

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You must remember that the Bible as we have it today was written by a large number of different people, so far as we know without any knowledge of each other, without any understanding with each other, in entire independence. So that, if a certain writer does make a particular claim, why then we must consider two things. We must consider first as to whether or not in the nature of things and in the nature of the utterances which he makes there is any reason for us to accept his claim; and then we must remember that he cannot in the nature of things make that claim on behalf of any of the other writers.

People thoughtlessly imagine that, if they find a statement in any part of the Bible, it holds good for every other part. But why should it?

Let us notice for a minute what this book is. I hold it in my hand. There are sixty-six little volumes bound here together in one. They were written during a period of time covering perhaps a thousand years. They were written by different people, under different conditions, representing different points of view, expressing, so far as we know, only the individual opinion and outlook.

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Who were the authors? Who wrote the Pentateuch? We do not know. Who wrote Joshua and Judges? We do not know. Who wrote Samuel, Chronicles, Kings? We do not know. Who wrote the Proverbs? We do not know. Who wrote Job? We do not know. Almost every book in the Old Testament is an anonymous book. This is true of every one excepting certain of the prophets. But who were these prophets? We know almost nothing beyond the bare names.

When we come to the New Testament, is the condition much changed? No. Who wrote Matthew, Mark, Luke, John? Nobody knows. Who wrote the Acts? Nobody knows. We know that Paul wrote certain of the Epistles. Beyond that every single book in the New Testament is anonymous.

When were they written? We do not know. We can settle the dates within certain rather loose and wide limits, that is all.

Where were they written? In regard to most of them we do not know. How does it happen that they are bound up in one book? Purely a matter of convenience and habit, for reference, for easy use. In reality, instead

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of dealing with one book we are dealing with a little library,—a library containing sixty-six volumes. And it would be much more intelligently read on the part of most people if they had them as little separate books, and if then they would read them in the order in which they were written.

As already said, there is no definite claim made by these books as to either inspiration or infallibility. We know that claims have been made about the books. It has been said that they are inspired, all of them. It has been said that they are infallible, all of them. But these are claims made by people about the book, not made in any one single instance by the book itself or by any of its writers.

Now let us glance over the world for a moment, and note one striking fact, that it may throw some light on this matter. Is this the only Bible that is in the world? No. Each one of the great religions has its own Bible; and these Bibles are in general similar in many respects to our own. In other words, all these Bibles reflect whatever scientific knowledge was possessed by the people at the time. They contain history, as it was under-

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stood then, tradition, legend, wonder-stories of all sorts. They contain the ritual of the religion, its ethical teachings. They contain biography. They contain psalms or hymns or sacred songs,—whatever name you choose.

They contain teachings as to the nature of God and his relations to the world. They contain teachings as to the nature and destiny of man. Most of them contain what are claimed to be revelations concerning the unseen world.

And the followers of each of these great religions hold that their Bible is inspired and infallible. And yet these Bibles differ so in regard to great essentials that they cannot possibly all of them be inspired and infallible.

Which one is the inspired and the infallible one? The followers of each religion will tell you that it is theirs; and they say it just as emphatically as we do concerning ours.

Now have we any reason for thinking that our Bible is infallible and inspired that is not good for the followers of other religions? Frankly, to be honest, I must tell you that I

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do not think we have. This does not mean, mark you, that I do not place our Bible on a higher level than I do most of the other religious literatures of the world.

If I say that Shakspeare is not inspired and infallible, that does not mean that I do not think that he writes any better poetry than does Mr. Tupper or some other author. Because they are not inspired and infallible does not place them all on the same level. One work of art, though the product of merely human genius, may be unspeakably higher and finer than the work of some other man.

Such, then, is our Bible. How shall we find out whether it is inspired and infallible? I want to ask you to notice a few of its characteristics. I beg you not to say that I am attacking it, that I am criticising it. I am simply trying with open eyes to look at it and describe it.

I cannot accept the idea of the Bible that is taught by the Catholic church, I cannot accept the idea of the Bible that is taught by the orthodox Protestant Church, because I cannot find any adequate reason for accepting the beliefs about it of either.

THE BIBLE

Let us notice what the Bible is as a matter of fact, and some of its main ideas. As I told you, it was written during a period covering perhaps a thousand years. You must remember, however, that the time of which it claims to give us a general review is much longer than this, several thousands of years longer, perhaps.

We find the Bible, then, to be just what we should expect it to be, if we remember that the first parts of it represent traditions and beliefs and fears and hopes of the childhood world, and if we remember that it traverses a growth and progress leading from the lowest barbarism up to the heights of a spiritual civilization. And the Bible in its different parts reflects naturally, necessarily, the ideas and feelings of all these different stages of growth.

Go back to the beginning. Do you find accurate science in the first chapters of Genesis? Everybody knows today that the scientific ideas of the Old Testament were merely the reflections of the dreams and traditions of the early Hebrew race, of absolutely no scientific importance or authority whatso-

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ever, any more than are the stories of origins contained in other Bibles.

What about the history? Is the history of the Bible accurate? A large part of it we cannot put to the test; but we know that it is full of misconceptions and errors where we can test it.

What about its legends and myths? Does it contain these? Many of the stories of the Bible are as mythical and legendary as those about Hercules, about Saturn, about King Arthur and his Round Table, about Alfred. The Bible is permeated all the way through with these mythical and legendary stories.

What about its ethical teachings? Is it all inspired there? Go back with your eyes open and ready to see what is found. In some parts of the Old Testament, slavery, polygamy, divorce, witchcraft; such a treatment of women as is considered appropriate only to the savage stages of human culture at the present time; the loaning of money at interest condemned everywhere as wrong; and until very recently the Church has attempted to maintain this teaching; and yet nobody pays any attention to it today.

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You find, in other words, moral ideas and practices such as you would expect to find in the lower grades of civilization; and then you find that the stream, as it flows on, clarifies itself, the teaching advances, lifts, until you have some of the finest and noblest and sweetest to be found anywhere in all the world.

In other words, just as you ought to expect, you find the different stages of the world's ethical growth reflected and marked all the way along.

Is the Bible consistent in its teachings about God? Did you ever notice carefully, —try to be frank with yourself there? Go back far enough, you find reflected a period when human sacrifice in the worship of God was accepted. You find a time when God was represented as walking the earth like a man and talking with people. You find God smelling the burning sacrifice of Noah and rejoicing, and promising that he would not drown the world again.

You find God represented as establishing as a sign for the first time in history the beautiful rainbow; and yet we know that the rain-

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bow must have existed ever since water has fallen and the sun has shone.

You find God angry and jealous and partial. You find his worshippers supposing that he is a kind of being that they could carry about in a sacred box which they call the ark, that he could be captured by the enemy and the people lose the power that his presence had given them.

You find, in other words, all sorts of savage and barbaric conceptions about God in the early part of the Bible. And then you find the magnificent spiritual conceptions that were expressed by the lips of Jesus.

What about the nature and origin of man? Does anybody to-day seriously consider the Old Testament teaching as to the creation of man? Does anybody accept the teachings as to the nature of man? The Bible is not consistent here. Some of the Bible writers declare frankly and plainly that man is of the same nature as the beasts, that he has no more soul than they have, and that as they die he dies.

Other Bible writers give us glimpses of magnificent outlooks beyond the grave. Some

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of the Bible writers teach that man is a fallen being, lying under the wrath of God: others teach nothing of the kind. The prophets do not teach it. They have never heard anything about Adam or the Garden of Eden.

Jesus does not teach it: Paul does. The whole conception of the condition of man, his needs and progress, as taught by Jesus and Paul, are hopelessly irreconcilable.

The Bible, then, reflects the life of the world from the beginnings in barbarism clear up to the highest type of civilization. There is no reason why it should not. It is not derogatory to the Bible to recognize the fact: it is simply seeing what kind of a book it is, that is all.

But it goes without saying, after considerations like these, that, if it be inspired, it is differently inspired in different parts, and that inspiration does not by any means carry with it infallibility.

I wish now to ask you to take a somewhat broader view of God's dealing with the world. I shall come back at the end to look at our Bible again, and to say some things about it that will tend to balance those to

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which I have already given utterance. But, before I am through, I wish to ask if there is not a larger, grander conception which we can entertain of the revelation of God to his children.

Is there not a grander bible than that which we are accustomed to think of under that name? Is it true that God wrote one book and stopped writing two thousand years ago? Is it true that God used to speak to people and does not any more? Is it true that God used to superintend this human history of ours, enter into it, take part in it, help, lead, and lift the nations, and that he does not do it any more? Is he, as Carlyle used to say, “an absentee God?”

As prefacing this consideration let me quote a few words from Lowell:—

“God is not dumb, that he should speak no more;
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor;
There towers the mountain of the voice no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who bends,
Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore.

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“Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains
shroud,
While thunder’s surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophets’ feet the nations sit.”

Now let me ask you to look abroad a little, and see how wide, how unspeakably magnificent, is the real conception of the growth of God’s bible revelation to the race. The revelation of God began with the first morning. It is a progressive, continuous revelation. It is as wide as the race. God has always been revealing himself to men, just as fast and just as far as they could think and feel and hear and see and write down the record.

Think for a moment how petty our ideas are. Shall we confine God’s scientific revelation to the dreams and fancies of certain Jews thousands and thousands of years ago? Where has God written his scientific record of himself? Is it not in the hieroglyphs of stars across the heavens? Has he not written

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with his finger on the rock leaves of the earth under our feet? Has he not written in the constitution of matter that the chemist investigates and unfolds? Has he not written in the wonderful discoveries that have been made as to the nature of matter, as to light, as to all the marvellous forces that make up the universe all around us?

Here is God at work now, writing his word. Just as fast and as far as we can read it, we discover his revelation of truth. And his prophets and apostles here are Copernicus and Galileo and Kepler, and Newton and Herschel, and the great names of those that have reverently followed after the thoughts of God as manifested in the universe around us.

And there is that greatest revelation of all, so far as our scientific glimpse of this bible is concerned, that we call Evolution,—a conception of the universe in all its wonder and range; and Herbert Spencer is here apostle and prophet.

Is not God revealing himself in the development of life on this planet, from the lowest form in the ooze of the ocean shores up

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to the highest development of man? And here those who have read and written it down are the great biologists,—Darwin, Huxley, and their host of coworkers.

Is it not God manifesting himself in the unfolding and development of the race? And here are the great anthropologists, those who have studied man from the beginning, from the first steps that he took towards civilization until to-day,—are not these the scribes who have written down some fragments of God's holy and wondrous law?

And, when you leave the scientific side, consider another revelation of God. God shows himself to us not only as truth, but as beauty; and all those who from the far-off beginning until to-day have caught glimpses of the glory and beauty and wonder of form and color—the artists, painters, sculptors—have helped shadow forth and reveal to us a little of the infinite beauty of God.

And the great musicians,—how they have attempted to give voice to that which cannot be put into speech,—the marvellous harmonies of this magnificent universe of ours!

And as to the ethical teachings of the

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world,—shall we shut our eyes to all that we do not find within this bible? If something that is true has been uttered anywhere on earth, a thousand, ten thousand years ago, in Egypt, India, China, the isles of the sea, no matter where, if it is true, it is God's truth, just as much as though it were in the New Testament or the Old.

Shall we shut our eyes to the ethical teachings of Lao-tsze, of Confucius, of the Buddha, of Mohammed, of Antoninus, of Epictetus, of Seneca, because they are not in this book? They have been wrought out as the result of the same experience in living on the part of struggling and sinning and falling and rising men as those that are contained here; and, if they are true, they are God's truth and profitable for our instruction.

What shall we say of the great lessons of heroism, of noble living, that we find all over the world? The martyrs,—they are not confined to one religion; the saints,—they are not confined to one religion; the heroes,—they are not of any one race. The men who have lived for truth, who have died for truth,—are they not God's heroes, though there is

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no record of them in this book? Are they not a part of the divine revelation of what it means to be noble men and noble women?

Is not God speaking to his children under every sky? Are not those of other colors and other races as dear to the infinite father heart as are we? Shall we not consider a part of this divine revelation the consecrations, wherever we find them,—mothers giving their health and their lives for their children; common, plain, simple men living honestly and nobly and devotedly in the midst of commonplace conditions? All that makes up the sweetness, the beauty, the glory of human life,—are not these a part of God's revelation of himself to his children?

And when we come to the songs, the psalms, the holy verse of the race, shall we refuse to look at them or give them their rank and power because they are not found in the Bible? We love and rejoice in the twenty-third Psalm, the forty-second Psalm, the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm; but shall we stop there?

What about "Abt Vogler" and "Rabbi Benn Ezra," and many another of Brown-

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ing, as divine, as inspired, as helpful, as glorious, as any to be found anywhere on earth? What of some of the wondrous words of Tennyson, what of Whittier's "Two Angels," and "My Psalm," and the "Eternal Goodness?" No more inspired religious verses in any Bible, in any land, under any sky, than some of Whittier's.

What of Lowell's "Bibliolatres," "After the Burial," "A Parable," and a dozen others, touching the deepest and highest things in the religious feelings and aspirations of the race?

What of Walt Whitman's "Joy, Shipmates, Joy," "Whispers of Heavenly Death," and many another that on wings of light carry us over the borders into the blessedness of the immortal life?

So wherever we find a truth, wherever we find a beauty, wherever we find a precept of righteousness, wherever we find a song of religious life and aspiration, wherever we find heroic characters walking with their faces alight with that glory that "never was on sea or land,"—wherever we find any of these things, we find God again to-day; and

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we walk with him and we talk with him and we feel his touch, and we hear tones of his loving and tender and sympathetic voice.

“Slowly the Bible of the race is writ.”

It began when man began to live. It is not finished to-day: it never will be finished. Every race has written a chapter or a verse. Every age has contributed to it; and in all the future there will be ever new and fresh contributions; because there will ever be a wider and deeper and higher unfolding of the thought and the love and the life of God.

This bible then, the bible of all truth, the bible of all beauty, the bible of all goodness, the bible of art, of music, of song, the bible of the Divine manifested in and through humanity,—this is the bible we accept.

But it does not put any dishonor upon or take the old Bible away from us. Nay, it seems to me, that it only adds to its beauty and its glory. I should not be happy,—I trust you would not,—to find out that God had been partial from the beginning of the world. I should not be happy to find out that he had let the world go on for several thousands of

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years before he spoke to anybody except a few selected patriarchs, letting the rest of the world wander and stumble in darkness.

I should not be glad to find out that he selected only one little people, living in a country hardly larger than the State of Massachusetts, and that he said nothing to all the rest of the world,—that all the rest was lying in darkness and wickedness, unpitied, untaught, unhelped. I should not be glad to find out that he came to this one people, and told them the only way by which anybody could be saved, and that since that day not a third part of the rest has ever found it out. I should not be glad to know that.

I should not be glad to think that God has confined his truth, his goodness, his love, his beauty, his care, in this way, to just a few of the years of the long history of the world, and to a few people here and there.

When I can think of this Bible as part of a larger and grander bible, when I can think of it as containing God's truth and love and life and guidance, and think that there is a larger bible that also contains God's truth and love and help and guidance, then I

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rejoice in the universal love of God for all his children; and I rejoice in this Bible as a part of that larger and wider universal and eternal love and care.

Let us note this Bible for a few minutes, and see some things that ought to make it peculiarly precious to us. What is it? It is one thing that the scholarship of the world can never afford to lose,—it is the religious autobiography of a great race. There is no other book in the world, any other bible in the world, that compares with it in this respect for one instant.

Here we see the origin of religion,—how it manifested itself among barbaric people, and developing and growing from those poor beginnings, rises to the pure inspirations and teachings of Jesus himself.

Then it is a great gallery of portraits. Rather shall I say it is a great hall or porch where we see wonderful men and women living and thinking and feeling and hoping and fearing, walking alive before us and teaching us morals and religion by their example.

Then it contains sweet and beautiful religious songs, that have been the comfort of

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thousands, and that we can take comfort in to-day as truly as men ever have done in the past. We can love these sweet and beautiful psalms, love the religious penitence, the inspiration, the suffering, the hope, the comfort.

We can love the precepts and teachings that the book contains because they are true, so many of them wrought out as the result of the experience of men, tested by human lives a thousand times over until we know they are true.

And then, something sweeter and better than it all,—the one thing supreme over every other consideration for which I love this book,—Jesus is in it; and what does that mean?

It means the one ideal human life,—a life in such perfect relation with God; a life in such perfect relation with other men; a life that so bravely faced sorrow; a life that stood straight and strong in the presence of temptation; a life that rejected all the allurements of the world; a life superior to riches and poverty; a life that faced pain, that was true to truth at all costs; a life that did not shrink from death, that faced death down, looked

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through the shadow and caught the light that is back of and beyond death, and that whispers us of immortality.

An ideal man, who goes before the progress of the race like the morning star, that we may advance towards by the swiftest conceivable means of locomotion as long as we please, and still see it serene, shining on high above and beyond and unapproached as before.

It is not the teachings of Jesus that we take as our practical guide. Sit down when you are alone, and read the Sermon on the Mount, and ask yourselves, in spite of your constant praise of that sermon, as to how many of its definite, distinct precepts you ever think of paying any attention to. You do not mind it, you do not obey it. You do not pretend to. You do not take half of the teachings of Jesus as a practical guide.

What is our practical guide? It is the ideal of Jesus, the ideal of humanity. We ask ourselves, How would he feel, what would he think, what would he say? and, led by the spirit of Jesus, we walk our pathway, coming ever nearer and nearer to God.

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It is this Bible then, the autobiography of a religious race, the growth of the religious life, the Psalms, the precepts, and, above all, the spirit and the ideal, the leadership of Jesus, and his outlook, in dying, beyond,—it is this Bible that we accept.

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION

VI

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION

Is there such a thing as direct divine inspiration? If there is, does this carry with it infallibility? And, once more, is this inspiration capricious, arbitrary, or does it follow some intelligible and knowable law?

The word "inspiration" as commonly used is a very loose and indefinite term. We talk about a speaker's being inspired by his audience. A poet is inspired by some beautiful view, so that he writes his poem.

The unknown author of the Second Epistle of Peter speaks of certain men, holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. He does not tell us who these men were; and he does not at all say as to whether what they said was infallible or not. The word, I say, is used in a very loose and indefinite sort of fashion.

I shall ask you now to review with me a good many varieties of human experiences

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that have been looked on as illustrating this fact of inspiration in one way or another; and then perhaps we shall be able to get a glimpse, at any rate, as to what it means.

It is practically true that all the people of the early world believed that the doorway between this life and the other, if not wide open, was at least ajar. It was the commonest thing in the world for people then to believe that they were taken possession of, that they were inspired by some invisible personality. Sometimes this inspiring presence was human, sometimes it was regarded as divine; but the distinction then between the divine and the human was not very clearly made; for many of the gods of the early world were the leaders, the heroes, or the great men of the tribes, who had been deified after their death.

But the fact for us to note is that this belief in inspiration, in possession, in speaking under this power, was a very common one indeed.

The founders of all the great religions have been looked upon as inspired, as taken possession of, as speaking and teaching under divine

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influence. The old Roman King, Numa, was divinely taught in establishing the religious and other institutions of his people. The Buddha became the enlightened one as he sat meditating under the sacred tree. He saw, he knew, he was taken possession of, flooded, by something more than an ordinary human light.

Mohammed was taught direct from heaven; and so, as I said, it is practically true of all the religious founders. It was believed by their followers that they were inspired to teach and lift up and lead the people.

We do not find this simply as connected with ordinary religious teachings. The priestess of Delphi, for example, was popularly believed to be inspired as she delivered her oracles. Socrates, the greatest, the wisest, the noblest of all the philosophers of the ancient world, believed as a literal fact that he was accompanied by a spirit. This spirit warned him, taught him, led him, marked out his pathway for him. This was not only believed afterwards by his followers, but it was believed by himself. We find ideas like this throughout the ancient world and in all the early religions.

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When we come to trace that line of religious development which preceded Christianity among the Hebrews, we come upon precisely similar claims. It is supposed that the Urim and Thummim were used in divination by the Hebrew priests. The early prophets and teachers were taken possession of by the Divine Spirit; and sometimes this spirit seized people in the most unaccountable way. It is said that Saul, for example, in some of his wanderings, coming in contact with the prophets, was seized with the same spirit which possessed them, and began to prophesy. The Hebrew prophets all supposed that they spake as moved by this spirit that came and took possession of them. This is true all the way through from the beginning of the Hebrew life until it is ended.

We are told that Jesus, when he appeared at Jordan to be baptized, was taken possession of in a special and wonderful way by the Divine Spirit, which dwelt in him and led him from that day to the end of his career.

The early disciples received, according to the promise, the gift of the spirit. As they were gathered together on the day of Pente-

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cost, there was a sound as of a rushing wind, and the whole place where they sat was, as the report is, filled with the spirit; and the new spiritual dispensation in the Church then began.

Stephen, in the hour of his martyrdom, had his eyes suddenly opened, and gained glimpses of the other life. It was a common thing in the early Church for this spirit to take possession of the people, and manifest itself in all sorts of wondrous ways.

One of the most peculiar was what is called "the gift of tongues." If Paul is correct in his account of it, then the writer of the Acts is mistaken. The latter speaks as though these persons used different languages, or, at any rate, were understood by persons speaking different languages. Paul rather describes it as a curious phenomenon. The people are seized by this spiritual power and thrown into a sort of ecstasy, during which they give utterance to sounds that are meaningless to those who listen to them, but which are believed to have some mysterious significance, provided there is any one present who is wise enough to interpret them.

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Paul discourages this manifestation of the spirit, and says, I would rather speak five words that could be understood than to speak ten thousand words in a tongue that is unintelligible to the hearer. But this was a manifestation, as it was believed at that time, of the presence of the spirit.

Paul had times, he tells us, when he was rapt away out of his ordinary consciousness, gained glimpses of things and heard words which it was not lawful for him to communicate. So we find all the way up from the beginning this manifestation of what was believed to be the inspiration of spiritual power.

As we come towards the modern world, have these things all passed away? There has hardly been an age in the history of the Church when claims similar to this have not been made. George Fox, and the Society of Friends which he founded, have persistently made the claim that they were moved and guided in their teachings and in their lives by the Divine Spirit.

All through the Middle Ages—and indeed they are not extinct in the modern world—

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there was a class of men that we have called, for lack of a better term, "mystics." They believed that they saw truth, which they did not arrive at by the ordinary process of the logical understanding, that light shone into them directly or that the light imprisoned in their own souls flashed out and illuminated those things which were not known by ordinary methods.

If any of you have, as I have done, been present during some excited revival meeting, perhaps particularly in the West and the South, you have seen people believing to-day just as really as they ever believed in the past that they were seized upon and overpowered by the Divine Spirit; and their actions and their words they regarded as undoubted tokens of the presence and the special activity of God.

Now I take it that we are not to blow these things all away with a breath of contemptuous criticism, as though they had no meaning: they are veritable human experiences. It is for us not to scout them, not to deny their existence, but, if we can, to find out what they mean.

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This divine inspiration, as it is supposed to be, has a wider range. I said at the outset that we sometimes spoke of the poets as inspired. In the olden days they made this veritable claim, and believed that it was real. They were seized upon by this influence, lifted out of and above their ordinary selves, and chanted these weird and inspiring songs

Not only this. There are in the experiences of at least exceptional men certain things which we need most seriously to take account of and explain, if we may. There are men who have what they call "direct intuitions of truth."

Consider, for example, a case like that of Emerson. Emerson rather scouted the logical intellect, the slow, plodding methods of scientific investigation. He said, I see, I feel, I am in direct contact with the truth, with the reality of things. And some of the noblest and wisest souls of all this world have been conscious of experiences which at any rate they have interpreted in this way, whether accurately or not.

There are men who believe that at some

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great crisis of their life they have had guidance. A flash of light has come to them which illuminated this path and left that in shadow; and, whether they would or not, they must go this way. They have had warnings, suggestions that have come as the winds come, they knew not whither; and they have not been able to explain them except by supposing that it was the inspiration of the Almighty which had come to guide them.

There is another curious class of facts. You will find that some of the greatest writers of the world, however logical they may have been, however scientific in their training or tendency, have had the feeling, somehow, that they were helped, that there was some power outside of them that did things for them.

George Eliot, for example, agnostic in her religion, positivist in her philosophy, has left it on record that it was not she who did the finest things, who wrote the best things. She felt as though, somehow, she was taken possession of, and that some influence was working through her. I do not know that she would positively teach any-

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thing of this sort: she simply records this as a fact of consciousness, as an impression.

It is said of some writers—like the elder Dumas, for example—that he had the feeling that somebody else was doing the things, and that he was looking on and enjoying the processes and the results.

They tell a story of a friend calling on him one morning; and, as he approached the door, hearing him in his boisterous laughter, he waited some time, thinking Dumas had a friend with him. But, on being admitted after a while, he discovered that he was alone, and that he was enjoying the actions and speeches of some of his own characters which he was engaged in producing. They seemed to him so apart from himself that he looked upon them as though they were the work of some other creator.

These are experiences the like of which I suppose many a man has, first or last.

Then there is another class of facts. I am going to trench here on ground that may to some of your minds be a little more questionable; but I am perfectly certain that I am on the ground of solid fact, whatever the explanation may be.

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As hinting in that direction, let me tell you this. An intimate friend of Mr. Beecher's told me one day that Mr. Beecher told him as follows. I speak in this way so that you may see how direct the report is.

Mr. Beecher said it was no uncommon thing for him to preach in a trance. He did not say that he always did it, but that it was an experience that was not unknown to him. He would rise, and begin to speak, when there would be a sudden rush of blood to the head, and he would lose consciousness. Those were the days when he preached some of his most wonderful sermons. He would come to himself to find the people holding on to the pew in front of them, absorbed and intent with listening; and, when some one would ask him what he meant by saying a special thing, he would have to wait for the report of the sermon, for he was not clear as to what he had said. This is reported as an actual experience.

There are people illiterate, unlearned, who, while entranced, will deliver the most remarkable addresses, perhaps an hour in length, —intelligent addresses on subjects which they consciously have never studied.

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There are other persons, who cannot write poetry, who will deliver very respectable verse on topics furnished them by the audience, when they are in this peculiar exalted condition. I can offer at the present time no explanation as to what the power at work is, whether it is some outside power influencing them, having possession of them, inspiring them, or whether it is simply an exalted condition of their own faculties, or whether, again, it is the work of the subconscious self breaking through the ordinary boundaries and delivering itself after this sort of peculiar fashion.

These, however you choose to explain them, are facts with which every one is familiar who has made any careful study of these matters.

Then there is another thing which needs explaining. What is genius? What constitutes a genius? A genius is a man who at certain times in his life, at any rate, manifests unusual, transcendent power,—a power not ordinarily to be explained, a power of which we can give no practical account; or at least, so far as I know, there has never

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been a practical account given, unless it be by a writer to whom I shall refer in a few moments.

What is this genius? How is it, for example, that Mozart is a wonderful musician at the age of seven, while another man is hardly able to tell the difference between two tunes after he has lived seventy years instead of seven? What is this special endowment? There are large numbers of cases of boys, with the most extraordinary mathematical ability. A little boy of six will work out problems almost instantaneously in his head that many men could not work out in a week on a blackboard. Why is it? What does it mean?

And one strange and peculiar thing is that it is not very unusual for this boy, as he grows older, to lose the power and become commonplace, like the rest of us. What is this inexplicable thing that we call genius? Is it the inspiration of some outside power? Is it the upwelling of the subconscious self? What is the source of it? And what does it mean?

There is another class of facts which I

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must refer to in order to complete my category. There are persons, thoroughly educated and intelligent people, who have received premonitions, warnings of danger, the truth of which has been verified.

I have in mind, for example, one of the best-known women in this country, one of the most clear-headed, best educated, noblest of women,—a woman whose name is a household word. I presume there is not a village in America that does not know about her. She told me of an experience like this.

She was riding on a train in the West. The car was practically empty, when suddenly she was seized almost—you might speak that way—by a power that compelled her immediately to leave her seat and get over to the other side of the car. She said it was an influence almost irresistible; and she had hardly made the transfer when the side of the car she had left was crashed in by a collision; and in this peculiar way her life was saved.

What did it? Is that inspiration? I know another case. An army officer in South Africa, suddenly impressed that where he

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was sitting was a place of danger and that he must move, leaves it just in time to escape a shell which exploded and would have killed him, had he remained.

And a friend in New York is told by what claims to be an intelligence from the other world that he has just saved the life of this officer in South Africa. No communication between the two. These are facts. What are we going to do about them? You may ignore them if you choose; but it does not make them the less real.

What do all these things mean? Now I, for one, find it very hard indeed to believe that the Almighty, the God of this universe, is partial; that he has peculiar personal favors to bestow upon one person, and not upon another; that he goes out of his way to heal one sick person and lets another die; that he listens to the prayer of one person, and does some peculiar and special thing as the result of it, and turns a deaf ear to the prayer of another apparently as needy and certainly as poor.

I cannot find it easy to believe that he interposes specially to warn a person of a danger,

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so that this person may escape an imminent peril. I do not say that he never does it. I simply say I find it practically impossible to believe that he does it.

I believe that God works everywhere throughout this universe in accordance with wise and immutable laws, conditions that are without variableness or shadow of turning. So I cannot look upon these things as direct inspirations of God, out of the ordinary, arbitrary, capricious.

I cannot believe that the universe is thus to be thought of as a scene of disorder and confusion. But I am not to dwell upon it. I am to make just one or two suggestions about it, and let you do with them as you please.

If this world and this life of ours is immersed in a sea of spirit, if it is not all dead matter, if living people, invisible people, can still inhabit the universe,—our friends,—why then it is possible to attribute a good many of these things to their agency. If the belief of Socrates had a hint of truth in it, that there are those that we may call “ministering spirits,” whether they used to

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live here in this world or not,—people who care for us; and if they happen to be by when you are threatened with peril, and they are able to impress you or come to your rescue,—I do not see why it is not the most natural thing in the world that they should; just as people in this life, if they happen to be by the side of a friend when he is in danger, come to his rescue if they may.

This would account for the apparent capriciousness of these things. A man is down on Broadway, alone; and he meets with a serious accident. If he had happened to have an observant friend with him, he might possibly have saved him. So I may be threatened with some peril, and some invisible friend may be nigh and able to help me. On another occasion this invisible friend may not be there, and so I cannot escape.

I merely suggest this. If there be these invisible friends around us, then this would be a most natural explanation of facts like these,—more natural, to my mind, than the miraculous interference of the Almighty God of the universe, who is supposed to love and care for all his children alike.

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Then there is another explanation. And now I am going to speak to you of this great writer who has offered, so far as I know, the first intelligible explanation of genius. I do not vouch for it as true. Frederick W. H. Meyers, who died in England two years ago, left behind him a remarkable book, the title of which is "Human Personality." In this he sets forth elaborately one great theory of his, the agency of the subconscious self.

He taught a doctrine that I think I can make very clear to you in a few words, something like this.

I, for example,—let me speak of myself,—I am a good deal more than my ordinary, conscious self. You may compare the individual to an iceberg. An iceberg is two-thirds at least submerged. So Mr. Meyer's teaching is that at least two-thirds of our personality is below the level of our personal, conscious self; and down here, below the threshold, work is going on that we are not ordinarily conscious of.

I know this in my own experience. I know that after I have conceived an idea, after

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I have wrought out partially a sermon, an address, a poem,—no matter what it may be,—by and by, next day, there comes from some unknown region, floating up into the range of consciousness, results that have been accomplished of which I have known nothing. I have been at work, and did not know it. I have been at work down below the level of my ordinary consciousness.

There is no sort of question about this fact. If you have made any study of it, you know that men have wrought out in their sleep wonderful mathematical problems, that they have found the next day. The results they were seeking were accomplished in this unconscious way.

Now here is the point of practical application. If this be true, this subconscious self may be in communication with the subconscious selves of other individuals, and may in this way obtain information, inspiration, uplifts, of which the conscious self knows nothing until by and by there comes an upheaval, and that which was unconscious appears in the conscious field and is clearly recognized.

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Mr. Meyers believed that this subconscious self may not only come in contact with other subconscious selves, but with spiritual intelligences that are no longer living in the body, and so reach out indefinitely, nobody knows how far. Here also would be reservoirs of personal power not ordinarily or consciously available.

This theory, he thinks, would explain genius. If the barrier between the subconscious self and the conscious is easily passed, then at times there come, rushing up into the visible and the conscious, powers and faculties that the man did not know he possessed. He is inspired, as he says. He is heightened in every faculty. He is mightier, more powerful. And then, again, when this opening, so to speak, is closed, he becomes his ordinary self again.

I do not offer this as verified knowledge. It is simply a suggestion towards explaining some of these abnormal experiences of men.

But now I am going to set forth what I believe to be true in regard to our personal relation to God; and you may think that I am going to concede here all at once

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and in a lump what I have been criticising and questioning. No matter. I am going to assert what I believe to be true,—that this matter of inspiration is not arbitrary, that it is under law, and that it is open to us all to be inspired, uplifted, led and guided by the Eternal Light and Wisdom and Love.

Let me tell you, then, what I think to be true. Paul says in one place, that “in him”—that is in God—“we live and move and have our being.” I believe that is literally true. We are submerged, so to speak, in the life of God, as much as a fish is in the sea or we ourselves are in the air.

God is all around us, impinging upon us at every point, seeking to come in and take possession of our lives. This is what it means to be in a universe like this, that is saturated with the life and spirit of God in every part.

Take my body, for example. If I am in perfect relation with the laws and forces of the universe, then I am in perfect health. The divine life, health, power, have free

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ingress. They flow in and take possession of my physical being.

But this is not lawless, mind you. It is not arbitrary. I cannot think it in a minute, and have it done. I cannot think *at* somebody else, and have it done for him. The laws and the conditions are absolute; and I must comply with them.

I have my house, for example, fitted, as I say, with electricity. Can I disregard the hard-and-fast and fixed conditions of the working of this mysterious and unknown electrical force? No, I must comply with them perfectly, or it will not work for me. If I have made a mistake anywhere, I must discover and rectify it, or the power is interfered with.

Come up into my mental nature. What is the intellect for? It is the instrument for the discovery of truth. Can I discover truth arbitrarily, without regard to my intellectual nature? Can I make a cross-cut for the attainment of truth? Can I learn it in six short and easy lessons? Can I learn it in any way except by complying with the fixed and eternal and changeless condi-

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tions of God's universe, which is the embodiment of truth?

In my æsthetic and affectional nature, here I must train myself to the perception of beauty, to the appreciation of loveliness and goodness. I can attain them in no other way. They are all around me, they are ready to come in; but I can block the channel, so that they cannot enter.

Take my character,—as a matter of righteousness, of living, can I disregard the conditions here? They are absolute. They are fixed forever. God simply cannot come into my life as righteousness if I do not welcome him.

So in every department of my life I must be willing. One of the profoundest things that Jesus is reported ever to have said is this: "He that will do his will shall know the doctrine." What does he mean? He that *wills* to do his will, he that is inclined to do it, he that wants to do it, he shall find it.

God surrounds our lives as the air and the light surround our dwellings. We can keep the air and the light out if we will. If

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we want them to come in, we must open the shutters, lift the windows.

God surrounds our lives as the ocean surrounds the shores, ready to come in, inspire, cleanse, lift; but sediment and débris of all kinds may be washed down from the interior and block the mouth of a river. The inlets may be filled up with rubbish; and the ocean cannot come in.

There is an old scripture that speaks of God as standing at the door and knocking, and saying, "If any man will arise and open the door, I will come in and dwell with him, and he with me." Here is the condition: we must arise and open the door. We must be ready to welcome the divine; and, when we are in this attitude towards God physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, no matter in what department of our lives, then the divine inspiration naturally and inevitably does come in, flooding, filling, cleansing, nourishing, beautifying, glorifying our lives.

I said a little while ago that it was reported of Jesus that the spirit came and took possession of him. I suppose there is no other character in history of whom it may be so

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safely said that the spirit of God did perpetually dwell in, inspire, uplift, and guide him.

I do not believe at all that this was miraculous, that this was anything not open to other children of God. Jesus so opened his whole nature to welcome the incoming of the divine that he lived a life in unison with the divine. That, I say, is something possible to us all. Jesus is simply an example of what a man may be,—a man so filled, so touched, so lifted by the divine that we may see the glory of God shining in his face.

I believe, then, that direct divine inspiration is possible. I do not believe that it necessarily means infallibility; and I do believe that it is not capricious, not arbitrary, but always in accordance with wise and perfect law. And I believe that, if we wish to live with God in this way and have him come into our lives, we must humbly seek and find the way.

We must seek for the conditions, as when we wish electricity or any other natural force to serve us. God works in this fashion, and not in some other. If, then, we wish him to work for and in us, let us patiently find his will, and faithfully obey.

THE SALVATION WE BELIEVE IN

VII

THE SALVATION WE BELIEVE IN

In the early stages of the world's history, the days when people naturally, necessarily perhaps we might say, believed in many gods, the one great thing was for them to find out what these gods wished them to do as the condition of everything they desired.

Since the civilized world has climbed up to the heights of a monotheistic belief, the one great thing for us is to find out what God wishes us to do as the condition of all things we desire. If you leave the thought of God entirely out of account, still the essential principle remains. As the condition of all things which we can desire, we must find out the essential laws of the universe and obey them.

And if God be God, if the working of the universe is the expression of his thought and life and purpose, then finding out the laws of the universe and obeying them is finding and obeying the will of God.

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In the beginnings of the world—how we need not stop now to trace—people came to believe that the important thing that they had to do was to offer sacrifices, to perform certain rites, to repeat certain phrases that were supposed to have magical power. Religion was largely an external, ceremonial thing. There was little emphasis laid on what to-day we speak of as ethics.

At a later stage in the history of the world, people almost universally, in Christendom, came to feel that the principal thing for them to do as the condition of God's favor, as the way to salvation, was to hold fast to certain beliefs which were supposed to have come to them by divine and infallible revelation. The ceremonial was still retained; but it was relatively of less importance. The great emphasis was laid on belief, conformity in thought. What kind of a life a man lived was of less importance.

In the modern world—and we believe it is a great step in advance—we have come to care chiefly for the spiritual attitude, for what men are, for what men do. We have no objection to ritual and ceremonial. We

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do not care how long or how minute a man's creed may be. But the thing that we desire most is to find out that these things issue in character, that men become kind and true and loving and helpful.

We think that these central, essential things, these things that make up the essence of life, are of more importance than any of those others on which the emphasis used to be so strongly laid.

In those old days, and according to popular definition still, salvation was something chiefly pertaining to another life. It was something wrought out for us through a great sacrifice, through infinite sufferings. It was the appeasing, and so the turning away, of an infinite anger against human sin. It was deliverance from the results of the fall. It was getting out of one place and into another by and by. It was mechanical, it was external.

I do not mean to deny that those who held these old ideas believed that in some mystic way results were to be wrought in the inner nature of man. He was to be changed. He was to be delivered from the old inherited

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sin which had come down from the father of the race, and was to become a child of God. But in the popular mind the salvation was something sudden, something miraculous, something wrought out for us, something chiefly external to us, something dependent on belief.

We have come to hold very different ideas from these; and some of these I propose now to dwell on.

What do we need to be saved from? For the world needs salvation to-day as much as it ever has needed it in the past. We can still use the old word, and crowd it full of significance and wonderful meaning.

Only the essential thing is here. We do not hold any longer a miraculous idea of the universe. We do not believe any longer in God as outside the nature of things and working upon it. We do not believe that man fell in Adam. We do not believe that he is under the curse and wrath of God. We do not believe in a mechanical deliverance from any anger. We do not believe that it makes much difference as to heaven and hell as to where we are, in this world or any other.

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The evils of this world in our view are natural. They are the results of broken law. Salvation, then, is natural, a perfectly natural thing, something not wrought out for us, something wrought out in us, something which we become, something which we achieve.

What is it, then, that we need to be saved from?

In the first place I shall touch on one of the main characteristics of our liberal Church, one that has been made the subject of criticism, one for which frequently we are contrasted with others to our disadvantage.

We lay great stress on the discovery of the truth, on being delivered from ignorance. The first thing, then, the first condition of salvation with us, is salvation from ignorance. It is finding the truth.

This may seem to you at a superficial glance as not quite consistent with that other statement which is so frequently made, that Unitarians have no creed. If we have no creed, why do we so insist upon the truth, upon finding and believing it?

When it is said that we have no creed, the

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slightest, the most superficial thought ought to teach people that what is meant is that we do not believe that the intellectual acceptance of any creed is essential to salvation, and that we do not propose to tie ourselves to the beliefs which we have attained in our so-far advance, but to keep ourselves free to accept any new truth which may come to us to-day or to-morrow or next year. This is what it means when it is said that we have no creed.

We do not believe that the acceptance of any intellectual statement is in itself pleasing to God, will ward off his anger, will assure us of his grace or forgiveness, or admit us to any place of happiness in this world or any other world.

What we do believe is this. We need to find our way, to escape the evils of life. What are those that crush us down and burden us? They are physical, mental, moral, social, political, industrial,—they are every kind of evil.

And how shall we escape them? There is only one way. A man may of course blunder and stumble into the right path when he

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wishes to go anywhere; but somehow, if he is ever to arrive at the goal that he desires, he must find the way.

The importance, then, of truth-seeking to us is purely practical and simple, and lies right here. We wish to know the laws of this wonderfully constructed body of ours, so that we may learn how to be well. We wish to learn the laws of the mind, so that we may escape mistakes and find the truth. We wish to understand the conditions of the growth of society, how people can live together peaceably, sweetly, helpfully. We need to understand political, economical, industrial laws; and this means knowledge, this means truth.

It means so simple a thing as, when you wish to get anywhere, finding the way that leads there. That to us is the importance of truth. There is no saving quality in truth except as it is a condition of finding the way to live.

And for this reason we welcome criticism, we claim freedom for study, we are not afraid of doubt. We do not believe that there is any evil in doubt, that there is any

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virtue in faith, in itself. Doubt is a condition of testing things to find out if they are real. Faith also should be a condition of testing things to find out if they are real. Faith and doubt both are good, if they help us to the right way of living.

We need, then, to be delivered from ignorance; and the old world wanders and stumbles and falls in its path over and over and over again, because, as Jesus said, the people are like blind men leading the blind,—they do not know where they wish to go and they do not know the path that leads there.

For this reason we Unitarians exalt criticism, study, science, the discovery of truth. Perhaps we lay, as some of our critics say, too much emphasis on it. It may be true; but, since we are one small denomination in all the world that does lay such emphasis on it, possibly it will do for us to care a good deal in this direction, and even then we shall not overbalance the preponderance of the great mass of the religious people in the world who lay their emphasis elsewhere.

There is another thing we need to be saved

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from, and of course the discovery of the truth is one of the paths that leads to this, —we need to be saved from unrighteousness, from the breaking of the laws of life. We lay so much emphasis on this that we do not so much say that righteousness is the condition of salvation as that righteousness is salvation.

If a man is right, what more can he be, in this world or any other world? If he is right, he is safe. Nothing can harm him. The universe is his friend. All laws and forces are his servants.

So we lay the great emphasis of our teaching concerning salvation on rightness, righteousness. If a man is not right, we do not believe that sprinkling water on him will necessarily make him right. If it helps towards that, we find no fault with it. If he is not right, if a man, for example, has led a mean, miserable, gross, selfish life for seventy years, and then at the last a priest anoints him with holy oil just as he is dying, we cannot see any causal connection between that external physical act and the salvation of the man.

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We have no objection to any of these external services or forms, if they are vital, if they represent something, if they help; but the essential thing we are after is rightness, obedience to the laws of God.

Salvation means getting into heaven. It means it with us just as much as it has ever meant it in any period in the past history of the Church; only getting into heaven with us is a different thing from what it was in the traditional teaching of the past.

There is no threshold of heaven over which a man can walk with his physical feet and find himself inside. Heaven is a condition. It is the intimate essential relation existing between man and his surroundings. It is being in perfect accord with the life of God, with the forces of God. It is perfect obedience to the laws of God.

Take the simplest kind of an illustration. Here is a piano that does not produce good music. Something is the matter with it. Can you effect it simply by praying over it, or using certain forms of words, or sprinkling it with water, ever so holy, by going through any kind of ceremonial? Can it be changed

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by fiat, by an act of will, by the exercise of power?

There is only one way; and that is to put it in tune. When it is in tune, then there is music; and, when we are in tune, physically, morally, spiritually, then the universe with its millions of fingers plays upon us; and that is heaven, that is happiness.

And if we are disordered, if we hate, if we are selfish, if we are devoted to low and poor and mean aims and ends,—if we are out of tune with the life of God,—no ceremonial, no prayer, no ritual, no sacrament, will necessarily change our conditions,—nothing done outside of us. We must be put in order.

Suppose your eyes are diseased: you cannot say then in the beautiful words of the old writer, “A pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.” Light becomes painful. You must cover your eyes with bandages or sit in a darkened room; and you must do that until your eyes are well. Nothing done outside of you will make any difference. You must be well.

If your ear is diseased, then beautiful harmonies may become torture to you. So any

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part of your nature that is out of tune when played on will produce a discord; and that discord is hell, and the music is heaven. And it does not make any difference whether you are in this world or any other world. All the worlds in all the universe are God's; and it is one God and one law and one condition, one hell and one heaven, everywhere.

So the great thing that we need to be saved from is the lack of being right, unrighteousness.

There is another thing that we need to be saved from; and that is the opposite of what we may well call worship. Worship is not a stately ceremonial in a cathedral. If there be worship in the heart, this may voice it and give it expression; but that is not worship. Worship is not the bended knee. If a man is in the mood for worship, the bended knee may be the natural expression of that mood; but the worship is in the heart, and not in the attitude.

I could wish that we Unitarians, who have revolted against what we regard as excess in these old-time directions, had not thrown off quite so many of the forms and methods and attitudes of worship.

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We are coming to-day to believe that the Puritans in their fear of popery threw away much of form and art, and picture and statue and beauty of every kind, that they might well have kept. They carried the protest perhaps too far; but they were eternally right in saying that the forms and the music and the incense and the statues and the pictures were not the worship, and that they might very easily, as they do frequently, become the substitute for the worship, and so stand in the way of the real development of the soul.

I could wish, I say, that we Unitarians had a little more of the form, the stateliness, the reverent attitude, the beauty of holiness. I could wish that during prayer, for example, every head might be bowed. It is beautiful, it is fitting,—this external act of reverence.

I know there are a great many people who, because these things have been mere forms, have cast them away. They need not be mere forms. There are those who come to feel that there is a little something not quite manly, a touch of not true humility, but humiliation, in these reverent attitudes. But

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Browning, in his poem of "Saul," speaks of
"That stoop of the souls which in bending upraises
it, too."

I believe that, unless there is this stoop of the soul in the presence of the great sanctities of life, there never can be the uplifts and the growth and the progress.

Worship, when you analyze it deeply, resolves itself into one word, "admiration;" and no man who does not admire has any hope in him. The painter who bends in reverence before the works of the old masters may come to something. He may not equal the old masters; but there is hope for him.

If he thinks he knows it all, and does not assume this attitude of worship, then there is no hope for him,—I care not in what department of life it may be. The man who rates himself as what he is and who teaches himself to look up to those who have done better than he has as yet,—reverently, worshipfully, aspiringly,—the man who does this is the man who can grow, who can come to something higher and finer than he has yet attained.

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We need, then, to be saved from low aims, from self-content, from satisfaction with our present condition. I hear men say until I am weary of it, "I try to do just about as well as I know how, and let it go at that." When a man talks to me that way, I have little hope of him. It means the apparently modest statement of conceit, of content with his present condition. It means that he is not touched with the vision of a great ideal, and humiliated because he falls so far short of it.

I have hope in men like Paul,—Paul, the man consecrating himself his whole life long to the unselfish life and the noble endeavor, giving himself and all he was, and yet talking about himself as "the chief of sinners," feeling how far he had come short. And there is a writer in the Old Bible somewhere who talks of being fairly contented with himself and then says, "But now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Let a man gain a glimpse of a great ideal, let him understand what a noble life means, then this poor, mean content is done with.

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And the man who sets out on a road that he knows is infinite, the end of which he can never reach, but who is fired with the longing to go as far as he may,—that man will come very near to God: he will leave the evils and imperfections of his life behind him.

So once more the thing need to be saved from is easy self-content, low ideals, poor human aims.

And there is another salvation, that from selfishness. We need to be developed into service. That, again, is one of the great ideals of the Church which we represent; and it is coming to be the great dominant ideal of the Church everywhere.

In the old days a man was chiefly concerned about saving his own soul. I remember a hymn the burden of which is the anxious question,

“Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I saved or am I not?”

I was brought up to feel that I must be content with nothing until I reached a time when I could feel sure that my soul was saved, and I thought one night that I had

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reached it, and for a little time I was happy; and then the doubt swept over me, and I wondered if I really was saved. And I lay awake nights, and I prayed and cried, until I pity that boy as I look back at him in his agony, striving to know whether, if he died before morning, he would go to heaven or hell.

The emphasis was laid on the saving of the individual soul.

In the Middle Ages, for hundreds of years in the life of Christianity, the emphasis was placed here. Men and women fled to the deserts, they lived in caves, they scourged themselves, they starved themselves, they lived in monasteries, in convents, they kept away so far as they could from the touch of evil, so that they might save their souls, be assured that, when death came, they would be admitted into eternal felicity.

To-day we are coming—and rightly, I believe—to feel that that attitude is contemptible, that it is the quintessence of selfishness. Do not worry so much over your own little soul. It will take care of itself, or God will take care of it, if you forget all

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about it. Edward Everett Hale has put it in those words become so trite because so fine, in his "Ten Times One is Ten":—

"Look up, and not down;
Look out, and not in;
Look forward, and not back;
Lend a hand."

This is the ideal of modern salvation. The man is saved who purposely neglects the question of his own salvation and gives himself to the service of his fellowmen.

And do you not see—you will if you think just a little—how essential, how eternal, how inevitable the truth is? The man who concentrates his attention on himself is a poor, mean, selfish man. A man is just as selfish who wishes to get happiness in the next life as he is if he wishes to get it in this.

There is no selfishness in the evil sense of the word, in my judgment, in desiring to be happy, in the next world or this either, or both. Selfishness is when a man devotes himself to himself at the expense of others: that is the evil of selfishness; and the man who does that in the religious sphere is no more

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a noble man than if he did it anywhere else. It is a poor, mean, contemptible ideal of life anywhere.

The artist who proposes to go off and devote himself entirely to art is a poor, small man. The book-lover, who will go off into his library and delight himself in no matter how fine and noble literature and forget the great sorrows and wants of the world, is a poor, petty man.

The man who devotes himself to gaining political office or money, as the one great thing, and neglects the world, is mean and petty. The man who devotes himself to anything that is purely self-centred is a poor, mean type of man, shrunken. There is no growth in him, no outlook, no hope, no divinity there.

Consider for just a moment. Pick out any great man in the past, any man you love, reverence. Take William of Orange, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln,—any one, if you please, still farther back in the history of the world, no matter who he may be,—any man that we have learned to reverence and love and honor; and why have we?

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Because he devoted himself to himself? No. Because he forgot himself, because he devoted himself to others, because he cultivated thought and feeling and love and devotion and heroism and self-sacrifice even to the death, for the race, for men.

There is a contradiction in terms between a man's being saved—that is, being divine; that is, being ideally human—and being selfish. The very faculties, thoughts, feelings, actions, which bring us into helpful relations to our fellows, as love, sympathy, pity, devotion,—all these,—these are the ones that make great men, that make good men, sweet, noble women.

And to cultivate them without being in helpful relations to our fellow-men is to say that we cultivate them without cultivating them. It is a contradiction in terms.

You cannot be saved alone. You cannot create a little private heaven of your own. And I pity the man who would stoop to be happy in any heaven so long as there was one lone, low, far-off wail of one lost soul.

The true man, the man that I admire, is he who would leave the throne and the throng

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and the music and the light and the joy, and go after the lost to the uttermost. Is not that what we admire and worship the Christ for? The salvation we believe in, then, is salvation from selfishness.

And there is one other point. We believe in salvation from despair, the salvation that comes by hope, and hope for everybody, hope to the uttermost, hope eternal. We cherish that faith that Tennyson has put into the lines in "In Memoriam";—

"That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."

Can we stand beside Browning? One of the most wonderful poems that man ever wrote is that in which he pictures himself standing in the Morgue in Paris. Who but Browning would ever think of making a sublime song of human hope out of the materials, gross and despicable, of the Morgue?

Here are suicides, here are the victims of murder, here perhaps those that have murdered; but Browning stands there, and sings a song of eternal hope. These poor wrecks,

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like moths that have flown into candle-flames; these poor wrecks, that have mistaken the way, that have followed false lights that led them a dance over the bogs into which they hopelessly sank; these poor strays and fragments of humanity,—he tells us in ringing words that they are God's children, and that this very intensity of striving which led them into crime means the power for something better by and by, somewhen, somewhere.

The mistake we make is in supposing that we can find good by breaking the laws of God, that we can find happiness in that direction. We strive and we go astray; and we break ourselves. And we go astray, and we shall break ourselves; and the pain and the anguish will remain just as long as we go astray and just as long as we break ourselves. But

“God's in his heaven.”

These souls are his. He loves them, he pours out his love on them as the sun shines on the broken bits of glass and the refuse in the gutter,—shines to cleanse, shines to

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purify, brings the alchemy that extracts the essence and the most exquisite perfumes from the filth of the gutters and the sewers.

We believe in a salvation that never despairs of anybody. The only thing that can keep any man from God is despair,—not sin, not crime, not going astray,—it is despair.

If a soul does not believe that God is ready to take him, why, of course, that keeps him from home. He dare not go. But Jesus has taught us in the most wonderful of all his parables that the minute a soul comes to himself and thinks of his father, the father is ready to go out and meet him, and fall on his neck and rejoice,—not because a good man is happy, but because a bad man is ready to come home.

That is the kind of salvation we believe in.

Again, in “Abt Vogler,” Browning teaches us what I believe to be one of the deepest truths of the world, that all the discords mean music, all the pain means joy, all the failures mean completeness, all the silences mean the possibility of music, all evil means the possibility of the opposite of that evil.

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“There shall never be one lost good! What was,
shall live as before;

The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying
sound;

What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so
much good more;

On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven the
perfect round.

“And what is our failure here but a triumph’s
evidence

For the fulness of the days? Have we withered
or agonized?

Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing
might issue thence?

Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony
should be prized?

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the
weal and woe:

But God has a few of us whom he whispers in
the ear;

The rest may reason, and welcome; ’tis we musi-
cians know.”

We believe, then, in the salvation that
comes of eternal hope.

Now at the end one question: Have I
departed from Christianity? Am I away
from the teaching of Jesus? A person accus-

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tomed to the traditional way of stating things would perhaps find little that he thought was Christian in what I have been saying.

It is charged against us constantly that we are not Christian, because we do not lay emphasis on certain forms, certain ceremonies, certain beliefs, because we dare to hold different ideas of the nature and office of the Christ from those which have been held by a great many in the past.

I dare to say—and I challenge the careful study of any man as bearing on the point I make—that Jesus was a Unitarian, the disciples were Unitarians. No other doctrine came into existence for some hundreds of years.

Further, I believe that the salvation which I have been outlining in this fragmentary fashion this morning is the salvation which Jesus taught. A large part of historical and traditional Christianity has been made up of beliefs and doctrines about Jesus instead of the beliefs and doctrines of Jesus.

Jesus said to his disciples: You can discern the signs of the sky, you know what the weather is likely to be by watching the clouds

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and seeing which way the wind blows. Can ye not discern the signs of the times? Why of your own selves judge ye not what is right?

Here he emphasizes the matter of truth, throwing upon each individual the necessity of finding the way for himself. What teacher has ever laid so much stress upon character as he? Nowhere in any authentic word of his has he held out the hope of salvation to any man on account of an intellectual belief, on account of a sacrifice, on account of a service, a ritual, the temple, the church,—on account of any of these things. The only condition for admission into his kingdom is character. It is what you have been and what you have done.

Read the famous judgment scene in Matthew, and see if I am not right. Then all the way through the note of eternal aspiration and worship perpetually pointing us to the Father. Do not be content with anything short of this. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

And then does he not make everything of human service? He tells the disciples who

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wished to gain preference in the New Messianic kingdom which he was to set up: This is the way it has been heretofore. The princes of the people have been lords over the people, and exploited them to their own behoof: but it is not to be so with you. The one who is to be great with you is to be the servant; and it is not he who has said, Lord, Lord, but he who has done the will of the Father. This is the salvation Jesus teaches.

And then everywhere that note of eternal hope in his words. He comes to preach a gospel, to tell good news to the poor, the needy, the suffering, the outcast. And then in the hour that worldliness and materialism regarded as the end of him—what? The birth, the opening gateway, the beginning.

As we study Jesus and see him on the cross, we are compelled perforce to look beyond the shadow and catch gleams of a light that shines through the shadow, and that teaches that this little life of ours is only the prelude, only the prologue, and that the life, the eternal, boundless life, the opportunity, the hope, the salvation of every soul, is over there.

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It is the salvation, then, which Jesus taught
in which we believe.

THE CHURCH WE BELONG TO

VIII

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I do not mean to say that Abraham, Moses, to the great, the wonderful fellowship represented by this Church which we belong to. It is the church of Abraham, of Moses, of David, of Isaiah and all the prophets. It is the church of Jesus, it is the church of the twelve apostles, it is the church of Paul. It is the church of almost every one of the Church Fathers of the first two or three hundred years. It is the church of the great, distinguished thinkers who have been free, and of the leaders who have appeared from time to time in the centuries since those far-off days.

I wish at the outset to call your attention and Isaiah and the prophets, and Jesus and the apostles, looked upon the world as we do, had the same thoughts about God and man and destiny. They differed from us undoubtedly in very many and very important ways.

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But, whether we would or not, we have had the name "Unitarian" fastened upon us, not as the result of our seeking.

That means the unity of God as opposed to polytheism or trinitarianism or any other theory that would divide this unity. In that sense all these to whom I have referred were Unitarians.

Undoubtedly, Jesus believed in the unity of God. It was the distinguishing feature and characteristic of the religion in which he was born and of which he was the flower and the crown.

The apostles would have been scandalized, horrified as in the presence of a sacrilege, to have had it suggested to them that God was other than one. That great word of the olden time has always rung out as the distinguishing utterance of the religion of the Jews,—“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one.” This set them apart from the polytheists and the idolaters that preceded and surrounded them.

And beyond any question it was the growth of the doctrine of the Trinity which has made it practically impossible in all these ages to

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christianize the Jews. Christianity has found its triumphs, since the doctrine of the Trinity was accepted, among the peoples trained in polytheism and who were not shocked or disturbed by this division of the nature of the Divine.

I said that the Church Fathers for the first two or three hundred years were Unitarians. Justin Martyr tells us explicitly that he believed, and that it was the common belief of the time, in the subordinate and derived nature of Jesus.

Tertullian, who himself was ready to advocate the new doctrine of the Trinity, tells us expressly that it was new, and that it was a surprise to most people, when presented to them, and that they were opposed to it as dividing the nature of God.

And in the next century, when Athanasius was making his great fight for the equality of the Son with the Father, Gregory Nazianzen tells us that he at first stood alone or with a very few. The Fathers of the Church, then, practically for three hundred years were Unitarians; and we know that the doctrine of the Trinity at last was created, not

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out of Bible texts or Hebrew teaching or tradition,—it was the result of philosophic speculations, and came more from the Greek than from the Hebrew.

Not only that, after the doctrine of the Trinity was established in the Church by force of the secular arm, and those who would not accept it were deposed from their places of authority and banished, still, just as fast and as far as there was a little opportunity for freedom of thought and expression, the belief in the Unity appeared again.

So it is not strange that at the time of the Reformation, when the shackles of the ecclesiastical bondage were partly broken and people were a little freer, this doctrine of the Unity appears once more.

You may be interested to know some of the great names since the time of the Reformation who have been a part of the Church to which we belong,—John Milton, Sir Isaac Newton, Joseph Priestley, John Locke, and a host of the great scholars, scientists, and thinkers of England and America.

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When we come to our own country, nearly all the group of strong, masterful, leading men who created this nation were Unitarians. The best authority we can find as to the opinions of Washington shows us that, though he habitually conformed and attended the Church that was nearest to him, he never was a communicant, and was heretical in his private beliefs.

Franklin was a free thinker. Thomas Jefferson was an avowed Unitarian; and he said that he hoped before his own century was through that all the young men of America would have accepted that belief.

The Adamses, Fillmore, and other Presidents have been Unitarians. Mr. Lincoln told Carpenter, the artist who painted the great picture of "The Signing of the Emancipation Proclamation," that he had never been able to unite himself with any Church, but that, when he could find one which planted itself distinctly and definitely on the two great doctrines of love to God and love to man, that Church he would join with his whole heart and soul. Lincoln, then, in his own personal and private beliefs was undoubtedly a Unitarian.

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All the great group of literary men who made the last century of this country famous, with very few exceptions, were Unitarians, —leading jurists, leading philanthropists, representative men in every department of life. And it seems to me a most significant thing, and worthy of a passing notice, that, —as the result of the voting of the whole country by its representatives for the choice of the first group of immortals whose names were to be selected for the Temple of Fame,—out of thirty or more then chosen, about a third of them should be Unitarians. And this, though Unitarians had no influence in the selection.

Such, then, is the goodly fellowship of the Church we belong we.

And yet, in the second place, I wish to note a remarkable fact, which hardly seems consistent with this previous claim. We are one of the newest of all the churches that are organized and that bear a denominational name; and we are one of the smallest.

Let me suggest to you a few of the reasons why we are small,—reasons which, it seems to me, we may face with even a little pride rather than with discouragement.

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At the outset, it is only within a little while that people have been allowed to think, that people have been granted freedom in the use of their brains. Almost throughout the entire history of Christendom, if a man dared to think and give utterance to his beliefs, provided they differed from those of the established authorities, he had to do it at the cost of ostracism, of banishment, of torture, of death.

And while here and there have been some, like Giordano Bruno, like Michael Servetus, with spiritual power enough to defy the world and die, the great mass of people are not of the stuff of which martyrs are made.

And then this great mass of the people have not been able to think or study, so as to arrive at any definite conclusions of their own.

For, in the next place, as one reason why the majority is all against us still, not the power of tradition, of custom, of habit, how few people there are who can shake themselves free of these, who in any department of life or concerning any question whatsoever have power to look at problems and

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settle them for themselves, and then have the moral courage to stand on their own feet and go their own way.

When I see what the power of fashion, of habit, of social custom, can be, I sometimes wonder, not that a few people escape and are free, but that anybody escapes and is free.

Then note another thing. There are some new religious denominations which can sweep a country by the mere force of enthusiasm. As an illustration of what I mean, and without expressing any critical opinion concerning it, look at the Salvation Army.

To become a member of the Salvation Army requires no independent thinking, no reading, no study, no acceptance of new ideas, no putting yourself outside the pale of your fellows as to your theological belief: it is merely a new method of work, a new object, a new movement which requires no intellectual change, but can be brought about merely by contagion, by the sweep of enthusiasm for some new object or endeavor.

So, you take the larger part of the denominations of Christendom, they agree in their

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essential ideas with all the other denominations. It requires no special study, no new thought, no personal independence, no ostracism, nothing difficult or disagreeable, to pass from the one to the other.

But with us it is different. If a man wishes to become a Unitarian, he must do a little thinking, he must understand what it means, he must comprehend the new thoughts about the universe and about God and man and destiny, he must be willing to brave popular opinion, he must be willing to go alone, if need be, against the prayers and protests of father, mother, wife, child, friend.

He must be ready, like Abraham, to listen to the new call of God, and go out from his people alone. You cannot expect a religion like this to be propagated merely by enthusiasm.

Then there is another reason of the greatest importance for our having remained a small denomination. In the beginning Channing had neither purpose nor desire to create a new denomination. Martineau has never been one to care for proselyting. Many of our greatest thinkers and leaders have

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deplored the fact that we were a separate denomination. They hoped, and many of them hope still, that our ideas would permeate the other denominations, that as matters of truth and scholarship they would become generally accepted, so that Christendom, as a whole, would become liberal, lift itself to the level of these new ideas, advance to these new points of outlook.

There are large numbers of our leading ministers and thinkers and writers still who look forward with hope to the possibility of our being reabsorbed in the general hosts of Christendom. They hope that the world will reach a point where they will be ready to accept our ideas, and there will be no need of our separate denominational existence.

We have never, then, made it a chief point in our effort to create or extend ourselves merely as a sect. We have cared—and I think it is true for me to say that universally we care still—more for the truths we represent than we do for denominational aggrandizement; and, if people only accept our truth and give us freedom to co-operate and work with them, we care little for anything else.

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And then there is another thing, very curiously, that in many quarters stands in the way of our denominational growth; and that is the very growth of our ideas. There is many a city, many a town, in America to-day where you cannot possibly organize successfully a Unitarian church. Why? Because the churches already in the field are so broad and liberal, they have accepted so many of our ideas. The people who sit in the pews say: Why, what is the use of being at the trouble of organizing another church? We get all the new thought, all the broad ideas, all the hopeful theology we wish from our present minister.

If all these churches preached consistently and continuously the fundamental beliefs of their creeds, then thousands would be compelled to withdraw and organize churches of another name. So that the very success we have attained, the very growth of our own ideas, stands in many places in the way of our merely organized denominational growth.

Now, in the third place, I wish to characterize this Church to which we belong in another way. The two parts of this charac-

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terization will seem at first contradictory; and yet they are not so.

We are the church of the world's scientific scholarship and at the same time the Church of the simplest democracy. What do I mean by our being the Church of the world's scholarship? I mean just what I say. I mean that all the free scholarship of the world in every department and direction is looking our way. Whether it has quite arrived or not, it is on the road.

All the great free critics, historians, teachers of church history, dealers with church tradition, in Christendom to-day, are liberal men. It must be so. He who cares simply for the truth, who wishes to find just how things are and have been, must of necessity come to us, because the truth is here. We are not afraid of the scientific investigations of the world. Ever since modern science was born, it has been in direct and bitter conflict somewhere in the world with the organized ecclesiastical powers. Hardly a teaching of science but has been fought by the hierarchies and the priesthoods, fought bitterly to the end; and the Churches have surrendered and

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accepted the conclusions of science only when they have been absolutely compelled to.

But we, these Churches of ours, accept fully and freely the scientific method as a method for the study of truth; and it accepts scientific results,—not guesses merely, not speculations. And yet it has no objection to anybody's guessing and speculating as much as he pleases.

But, so soon as anything is demonstrated to be true, we not only submit (as other Churches must and have to), but we welcome the truth, we gladly accept it; for we have planted ourselves firmly on this ground,—that the truth, the truth, the truth, is the only sacred thing in the universe.

The truth is the only divine thing. A human mistake, a human misconception, is not sacred. We cannot reverence it, no matter how old it may be, no matter how moss-grown with tradition, no matter how many men may have associated it with holy things. If it is a misconception, if it is a mistake, if it is not true, then it cannot be the word of God.

We believe that every scientific truth, every

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truth arrived at by any method, so soon as it is verified, is to be freely, gladly accepted as a new sentence in the real Bible, the real revelation of God.

So we are fitted to assume the religious leadership of the world's intellectual leadership. I am well aware that there are thousands of intellectual leaders, thousands of scientific men, who at present have no use, or think they have no use, for any church at all; but I believe that the explanation of this lies largely in here. The Church itself has been saying for ages that everybody must accept its dogmas, or else they could not be religious. These men have found out that they cannot accept the dogmas any more; and they have not studied religious matters deeply enough, and so they are ready to take the Church at its word. They say: We must follow the truth, and, if that takes us away from the Church, then away from the Church we must go. We must be honest with ourselves, we must be true to our own convictions.

But the time is coming, I believe, when these intellectual and scientific leaders of

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the world will recognize that there is a profound difference between theology and religion; and they will learn that theologies and dogmas that have been accepted may go, but religion remains; that new dogmas uttering demonstrated truth must come to take their places, and be accepted as our leaders and guides.

So, when we are through with this present unrest, I look for such a revival of real religion as the world has never known. We are passing through to-day the profoundest, the farthest-reaching revolution of intellectual thought and theory that this world has ever known. The change from Judaism to Christianity even was superficial compared with it. We are now in the midst of that change, blinded, disturbed by the confusions which always attend such a change; but we shall become readjusted by and by, we shall settle down and see things clearly. Then we shall know that religions may pass away, that theologies may pass away, but that religion and theology are things inherent in the brain, the heart, and the life of the world; that they must abide and grow.

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I said also that we are the most democratic church in the world. There is one thing that has always seemed very strange to me. Here in this country we boast that we are free from emperors and kings. We do not want any nobles, any lords superior to us. We claim equality, liberty, freedom, in every direction. We say that one man, in his essential rights, is just as good as another. We boast of those words in the Declaration of Independence that tell us that all men are born free and equal.

And yet there are thousands of people—and this is what surprises me—who seem, in religious, in ecclesiastical matters to be enamoured of royalty, of empire, of nobles, of lords, seem to love to surrender their own personality, their own freedom, and put it into the hands of over-lords, people who look down upon them and are ready to use them, like their support, but pay little attention to their wishes or their idēas.

Ours is the one Church of complete democracy; and you would think that in a great democracy like this the democratic principle in ecclesiastical matters would be appreci-

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ated. Our polity is that which was wrought out by the Pilgrims in the cabin of the "Mayflower," that which became the model for the government of the towns in Massachusetts, became the moulding power that shaped the State, and at last grasped and organized a nation. It is this principle of democracy, of freedom, governing ourselves in church matters as well as in political.

There is another great characteristic of this Church which we belong to. It is in a very profound and far-meaning sense the Church of this world, the Church of humanity. What do I mean?

The Church for fifteen hundred years has been almost exclusively other-worldly: it has treated this world with contempt, with contumely. In words, at any rate, it has looked down with scorn and contempt upon all things that pertained to this present life. Man has been looked upon as a fallen being, and as having been morally and intellectually incapacitated as the result of that fall. And the only object of the Church, or the one great object, has been to fit the people now, in their little, brief life, for another

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world. They have never expected to make this world over. The predominating idea has been that things were growing worse and worse, that there were to be wars and fightings and disaster until by and by there would come the collapse and catastrophe, the end of all things here and the beginning of all things over yonder.

This is not merely ancient thought. You will recall perhaps, as I do vividly, the teaching of Mr. Moody. Mr. Moody said distinctly and definitely, and with all the emphasis of which he was capable,—and he was capable of much,—that there was no use in trying to reorganize and save human society here. He said,—I think I very nearly quote his words, I know I quote his thought,—The world is a wreck, bound to sink. The only thing we can do is to get as many of the passengers off as we can, and let her go.

That was his conception of the world order. He expected and preached the immediate second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven.

Note the difference in the attitude which

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we maintain. We know that the human race is not fallen. We believe in humanity, in its integrity, in its general purpose to find the right. It is on this belief in humanity that our great republic is founded. If there is no basis for such a belief, then the republic is a folly and is doomed to inevitable failure.

The old idea has been that the world was getting ancient and hastening towards its decay. What do we believe? We believe that the sun is just up. It has touched and illumined certain lofty peaks. Here and there it is shining over the peaks, and with a slanting ray striking some portion of a plain, perhaps now and then illumining a valley. But it is morning. It is not even mid-noon. It is not night: we are nowhere near sunset. The human race has just begun its magnificent work here on this old planet.

We are civilized, we say proudly. A few people are civilized, in selected spots here and there. That is all the so-far civilization of the world means. The civilization is ahead of us.

It is fabled that Hercules, when an infant in his cradle strangled some serpents that

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had been sent to destroy him. This human race is an infant Hercules. We have strangled some of the serpents that have attempted our destruction; but, as the great world-cleansing labors of Hercules were ahead of him when he performed these wonderful feats in his cradle, so the great world-cleansing labors of man are ahead of him.

Civilization allures us as an ideal, as a dream, something we shall attain. We are competent to it. We can wipe out the vice and crime, ignorance, poverty, disease. There is not one of these things that we are not able to subdue and leave behind us; and that is the religious mission of the race. And we, this little band of Unitarians, are the prophecy of just that kind of this-world religion,—a religion that believes in God, in man, in possibility now and here.

The old Church taught that man was to be fitted for eternity by some other process than being fitted to serve his fellow-men here. We hold that the two are identical. There is only one way of being saved hereafter; and that is by being saved now, cultivating those qualities and characteristics

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of men and women that make them men and women, sons and daughters of God. And, when we save men here and now through the service of this present world, we have saved them for all times and all worlds.

We lay our emphasis then here. We believe that in finding God's truth and bringing our lives into accord with it we are delivering this world from its burdens and evils and fitting ourselves for the life that is to come.

We are in a very special and profound sense the Church of the living God. Put the emphasis on "living." It has been the traditional idea that God talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden, that he appeared to Abraham, that he spoke through the prophets, that he manifested himself specially through Jesus of Nazareth, that he wrought miracles by the hands of the apostles, but that their revelation and the special activity of God in the world ceased. And even during those long periods of time God confined his special activities to one little race, one little line of human development.

What do we believe? We believe, indeed,

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that God was in those far-off times, and that he did speak with his human children. We believe he spoke to Abraham. We believe he spoke in the most emphatic and beautiful way through the lips of his son Jesus. We believe that he was in the early Church.

But we believe, also, that he was not confined to the nation of the Jews. Not an age, not a people, has ever been left without his witnesses. He spoke by the lips of Zarathustra. He spoke through Confucius. He spoke by the ministry of Gautama. He spoke by Mahommed. He has spoken through the great seers and singers and teachers of all the world; those that have names, those that are nameless.

He has communed ever with every simple and trusting and aspiring heart. He has been alive and present from the beginning. He is to-day in the astronomic search that is tracing his pathways in the heavens. He is in the microscopic investigation, the Roentgen rays, that mysterious discovery of which we know little as to what it means or to what it may lead,—radium. God is in the steam-engine and the dynamo. God is in the tele-

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graph and the telephone. God is in all the discoveries, all the inventions, all the activities of man.

Whatever we do, whether we think of it or know it or not, we stand face to face with God; and we accomplish whatever we accomplish by understanding and obeying his laws. He is the living God,—not only in the wars of the old Isrealites, in the conquest of Canaan, in their battles with Philistia and Moab, he was in the wars of England, the struggles for human liberty, in the great thirty years' fight in the Netherlands, in our Revolution, in our Civil War. He leads the efforts and the blind movements of the nations.

He is working everywhere to-day. Men cannot escape him; and all the good that comes to the world comes by his presence and his ministry.

All the scholarship, all the music, all the art, all the literature, all that is sweet and fine and high, is just so much of the presence and the activity of God.

We believe, then, in this living God, ready to speak his word to-day, ready to reveal himself to-day as he has ever been, showing him-

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self to the humble intellect and the loving, trusting heart.

And we believe that he is to lead the world on until all the evils of the past are sunk down the horizon, are only memories; and the world is filled with the knowledge of God, the joy of God, and the peace of God, as the waters fill the sea.

The Church we believe in, then, is the Church of the living God.

